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THE

NEW VIRGINIANS

“Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,
And merrily hent the stile-a :
A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a.”

—*A Winter's Tale*, Act iv. sc. 2.

THE
N E W V I R G I N I A N S

BY THE AUTHOR OF
'JUNIA,' 'ESTELLE RUSSELL,' 'THE PRIVATE
LIFE OF GALILEO,' ETC.

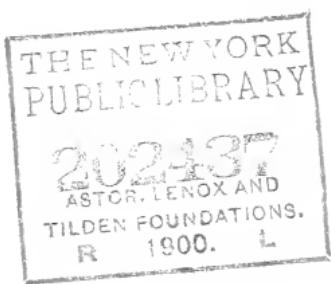
IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

M D C C C L X X X

Checklist



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THE NEW VIRGINIANS.

LETTER VIII.

. . . April 8th, 187.—Your letter arrived two nights ago. It was ten o'clock, and I was sitting by the fire improving my mind on the subject of onion-culture, while waiting for the mail which an English neighbour was bringing from the post-office on his way to his own home. I went to bed thoroughly awake after reading your letter, and rehearsing mentally (as I have often done before) the first chapter of the “little book” you have more than once urged me to write. In the night there was a great thunder-storm. Thought I—“Aunt Henry-Ann will be sure not to come to-morrow, especially as it is

her day. I will sit down and write that first chapter, and get it out of my head." Aunt Henry-Ann is the coloured lady who comes to "wash, when she feels like it," for a consideration. Morning comes. M., the early bird, rises. I stay a little. Bed is such a nice place in which to collect one's thoughts. Which of two sentences will be the better for the beginning of that first chapter? This, or that?

Chop, chop, chop! I jump up and peep out at the balcony door. Behold aunt Henry-Ann chopping wood for her fire! No more collecting of thoughts or balancing of sentences for me. I have to hurry down, lest she should suppose I was in bed when she came. She wants a big boiler, buckets, tubs, soap, and blue, and her rations—*i.e.*, half a pound of pork and a quart of corn-meal. I generally give out half the day's rations in the morning. It is more troublesome; but I do it because some of the negroes began to play the trick of walking off in the middle of the morning with the day's rations, and never coming back. Aunt Henry-Ann must also have a sieve (to sift the bran from

the meal), a wooden tray for making up the dough, a plate, and a knife. I always give her a white plate and a clean knife. Some people consider that a negro speedily becomes demoralised by using either. Tin plates and dirty knives they believe to be conducive to a state of greater efficiency. I differ from them. . . . After that, I feed various hens and chicks, breakfast, do some "tidying-up work," highly necessary, seeing that the sitting-room is sprinkled all over with relics of the gentlemen's last night's *tabagie*. Then there are nosegays to make up of phlox and pansies. Then I go to hunt for eggs, lest Jip should find them first, and eat them all. She knows that she is a thoroughbred English pointer, so she takes liberties. Then, to chase hens from the garden. Then, to find out the hole through which Jip got into the garden last night. Find said hole, scooped out under the lowest plank of the fence. Stop it. Then go up the garden, and see whether aunt Caroline stopped the fence below as I ordered her. I was called away, and was unable to go out to her again. Find

the usual results of not being on the spot doing overseer. The holes have been stopped up with clods instead of stones. The rain has washed the clods, and they crumble already. So now I have to place the stones myself. After that the sun shines out, the temperature rises to 70° odd, and I open the hotbeds. Then I think I will go indoors, make myself neat, and write the first sentence of the first chapter.

Just as I open my desk, E. calls to me to bring the sweet-potatoes. He has got the hotbed ready for them. They want a hotbed all to themselves, and can bear a heat which would kill anything else, being tropical in habit and habitat. I rush out with the box of tubers which we had carefully looked over the day before. I give a final examination, and hand the tubers as he places them. Then I get tallies to mark the kinds,—red, white, and yellow. The yellow are by far the best; they taste like chestnuts, only not so floury. The white grow as big as a child's head, but are poor in quality.

Then comes dinner, and clamorous chicks to

feed, and more meal for aunt Henry-Ann. At dinner I remember that, if I want to make root-grafts, now is the last time of asking; also, that I have a bundle of black-currant cuttings and one of grape cuttings to set out. I drag my cutting-box up from the cellar, and get out apple-roots and grafts. I make a dozen, and then cut my thumb. That, of course, is the fault of my grafting-knife. Then I take a tin dish and a trowel, and make grafting-wax *à la* Saint Fiacre. After the root-grafts and the grape and currant cuttings are safe in the ground, the sun sinks behind the mountain, and reminds me that the hotbeds require watering and shutting up, that there are clamorous chicks wanting their supper, and that there is cream to skim, and Nannie waiting to be milked. A few more odds and ends finish the day's work; and after supper I am a great deal too sleepy to collect my thoughts or write any "first sentences."

That is a picture of one day, and not a busy day either. What can I say of the busy days—

of the days when I have niggers working in the garden, for instance? On such days I ought to be in the garden before sunrise, with work marked out, and tools all ready for them, that no time may be wasted in searching for things which ought to be at hand. To see a nigger looking for a hoe is, I do think, the most provoking thing in the world. You would suppose, from the leisurely way in which he moves, that he had been ordered, under severe penalties, not to find that hoe under half a day. You cannot imagine the trouble we have during the hoeing season to make the niggers bring back the hoes, and put them in the tool-house. They throw down their hoes just where they happen to leave off work at sunset, and this they do time after time in spite of all remonstrance. My troubles are not over when I have my niggers at work. I must be there, keeping an eye on them all the while, else I know that Sally will squat on the ground, and Charlotte will lean gracefully on her hoe, and Dan will go to sleep standing. What can I say of the days

when niggers ought to be at work in the garden, but do not come *because* they have promised? I groan in spirit as I remember such days last year, when I looked at the sky, and E. prophesied a thunderstorm within twelve hours, and I knew well that the seed going into the ground before or after the rain would make the difference of a crop or no crop. I assure you that on such days I learnt to understand the meaning of the phrase, "The tongue cleaving to the roof of the mouth." On such days one drinks hot tea (almost) by the bucketful. One snatches at spring-water, melon, water-melon, cucumber, anything juicy. And one returns to hot tea as the most grateful and comforting of all palliatives, better even in the long-run than iced water. Then E. comes in from the field, and inquires kindly, *à la Virginian*,—"Well, young woman, how do you come on?" or, "My dear, the thermometer is up to 98° already" (this at 10 or 11 A.M.); "don't you think it is time you came indoors?" or, with a dilapidated brown Holland garment in his hand, "I say, mend my

rags, will you?" Who could be deaf to such a pathetic appeal? Yet I groan, inwardly and outwardly. "Did you ever see anything like that? And I only finished making it last week. Oh!"

"How could he have torn it?" says M.

"An acacia-bush, or a fence-rail, no doubt. But oh, if we could but get some stuff that would last!"

I suppose that will be our chronic complaint, now that our English clothes are almost worn out. Nearly everything is made up North; and made for the Southern market, "cheap and nasty." The cheapness is only comparative; I have yet bought no article cheaper than I could have got the same in England. But the "nastiness" is very positive. You pay half-a-crown for a ribbon that is half cotton; you pay ten shillings for a light pair of stuff-shoes that come to pieces in a fortnight. And so on.

Long before we came here, a relative of mine was telling me of her brother-in-law's admirable wife, who, as they live in a region remote from Oxford Street — namely, Viti Levee — actually

made her husband's trousers ; and not satisfied with that, had weeded a quarter of an acre of cotton for a wager ! In my inexperience I "poor thinged" her from the bottom of my heart. Anybody may "poor thing" me now who likes ; for at this present writing, I must have made dozens of the unmentionable garments, not to speak of odds and ends in the shape of coats, shirts, and knitted socks.

Of course I could, if I chose, do as some of my friends do—*i.e.*, employ a white seamstress. But I would rather work my fingers to the bone than have one of these mean white girls in the house. Even if M. and I did not mind it now and then, we would not subject E. and A. to the annoyance of having to repel attempts on the seamstress's side to get up a flirtation at meal-times ! Having to shake hands would be bad enough ; but the smirks and smiles and small-talk would be unbearable ; and besides all that, M. and I would prefer not to have to refuse such requests as, for instance, the loan of our last new hats or dresses "to go to church." This

has not unfrequently happened to some of our neighbours, and they have been annoyed. But I consider that they bring the annoyance on themselves. They go to the houses of the mean whites and sit gossiping by the hour. If the mean whites go to their houses, they shake hands with them, they ask them to stay to dinner—in fact, they treat them in every respect as equals. Then comes a request for the loan of the best bonnet or shawl, and both sides are annoyed : the F. F. V. because of the request, and the mean white because of the refusal. Did I but know of a white woman who would keep her place, I should be happy to give up my needle-work to her ; but, in the country at least, such a creature does not exist. Were I to give my work to be done at home, the bringing it back would be the pretext for stopping the whole afternoon “to keep me company !”

Now I know you are getting ready to say “poor thing !” Think better of it. Don’t say it. One hears of the round man in the square hole ; of this man’s struggles to be this or that ;

of this woman's aspirations to be something or somewhere. Well, here for once is a small woman in a small hole that fits her perfectly. I am never haunted here by the blue-devils that always possessed me in England. I can eat and sleep, take long rides, dig and hoe, and lift heavy weights, and above all, I can *breathe*. I have not known a dull moment since I came here. To find a new fern makes me happy for a week. When I find the climbing fern Lygodium I suppose I shall be happy for a fortnight. Indeed there is so much that is new and unexpected and delightful, or amusing in a small way, that I cannot conceive how any one could be dull here. Yet I have heard of a very few who hated Virginia. I was told by a Virginian lady of an Englishwoman who thought Virginia "a horrid country," and who was quite sure that God was not going to let "those nasty blacks" be in the same heaven with herself; sentiments which considerably astonished the ex-slaveholder, who thinks she should not like to live anywhere without those "dear black faces" round her.

Some time ago I lent a Virginian friend a copy of ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin,’ which I had not read for many years, and which seemed to me, as I read it anew, absurdly exaggerated as to the virtues of the blacks. On the return of the book, I seized the opportunity of asking a candid opinion both from my friend and her husband, a well-educated man who has travelled in Europe, and is quite open to conviction that there are other countries worth living in besides Virginia. “Was there ever such a creature as Uncle Tom ?” I asked. “Could such a character exist ?”

“Yes, madam,” was his reply. “I have known an Uncle Tom, and a better than Uncle Tom. My uncle, Judge W., had a slave called David, whom he educated himself, and who was as faithful to his interests as if he had been his own son. This man was left in charge for months at a time, and kept the whole plantation in order, writing a regular report to my uncle, and managing everything in the most efficient manner. He spoke and wrote and cast accounts

as correctly as any white man. And just here, madam, Mistress Beecher Stowe makes a great mistake. In order to rouse up a proper horror of slavery in the reader's mind, she is bound to make poor Tom come to such a tragic end. Whereas, in real life, such a paragon would have found a hundred wealthy men ready and anxious to buy him at any price. I cannot, for instance, conceive such a thing as my uncle's boy, David, falling into the hands of a wretch like Legree. Mistress Stowe, by the way, is true to the life in making Legree a Northerner. Nothing ever frightened the slaves so much as the idea of being sold to a ‘Yankee.’ ‘Yankee masters always so hard,’ they said.”

Said my lady friend: “I became so excited over Eliza crossing the river on the ice that I could not put the book down. I was so absorbed in it that they all laughed at me.”

Mr — resumed: “Taken to pieces, no candid person could say that each separate fact as related in the story might not have occurred. Supposing, now, such an impossible thing as

that a pearl like Tom should fall into the hands of a Legree, then, indeed, Tom might come to such a sad end. But though taken bit by bit, it is life-like ; as a whole, the book is as glaringly untrue a representation of the South and of slavery as it is possible to be. It is just as if I, madam, were to collect in one book all the stories of unhappy households and of beaten wives that I could find in all your English newspapers ; were to link them all in one narrative, grouped round a central hero or heroine ; and were to locate that narrative in the county of Cornwall. My story of cruel husbands and beaten wives might make a sensation ; might draw tears from the reader's eyes, perhaps. Yet you would not, were you the critic, announce with a voice of authority in your London ‘Times,’ that because of these abuses, the institution of marriage in Cornwall ought henceforth to be abolished.”

. . . An English neighbour has been giving vent to her indignation. She wanted to engage a black cook. A woman came, who seemed in-

clined to take the place, but demurred when she found she could not have a feather-bed to sleep on. She made a grimace when informed by the master of the house that he and his family always slept on hard mattresses. "I got no use for no mattress ; I sleeps on feather-bed, allus."

It was intimated that she need not stay longer, as she did not wish to take the place. She nevertheless took a good stare round the room, and then, with her round eyes fixed on my friend's pretty grey hat and feathers, "I likes that hat you w'aring, mightily ; what'll you take for that hat ?"

E. and I have come out in a new line altogether, and have had a good laugh over it. We have been selling seed to the niggers ! Last year I gave away quantities of seed - potatoes and other seeds to the negroes who worked for us. They always seemed so ragged and poverty-stricken that I could not bear not to do them a little kindness at such small cost to myself. But my liberality answered so badly that E. declared that none of us should give away a

cent's worth of anything again. Negroes, like white people, do not value what they do not pay for. They lost or wasted the seed, or let their pigs get at the potatoes, and then came and asked for more. Besides that, numbers who did not belong to the neighbourhood, and who had never been employed on the place, came begging, and appeared quite astonished at being refused, when we had given to uncle Patrick and aunt Caroline and others. This begging from all and sundry became quite a nuisance at last; so E. required them this year either to pay catalogue prices for the seed, or else—what we liked much better—pay by working in the garden. The mean whites have been begging too. If we give away seed to niggers, why not to them? A mean white came a few days ago, and called “O!” It is a way they have, to stand fifty yards off and call “O!” (I suppose it is too much exertion for a mean white to say “holloa.”) E. went to the fence and answered; whereupon the mean white approached, and Jip barked herself hoarse because she was not

allowed to tear him to pieces. E. said, "Good morning." The mean white would have liked to hitch himself on to the fence, but Jip objected; so he stood without support and said, "Morn', sir."

"What can I do for you?" says E. It is like catching an eel to bring a Virginian to the point at once; but E. does it sometimes.

"Did you have any cabbage-seed to spar', sir?" E. thought not.

"Wal, did you want to buy any eggs?"

E. smiled and thought not. Buy eggs of a mean white! Not unless one wished to eat eggs *à la Chinoise*.

"Wal, couldn't Miss Ma'y spar' my wife some flower-seed?"

E. came to me with a sweet smile. "My dear, there is a man who wants to know whether you will 'spar'" his wife some flower-seed."

I inquired who the wife was and who the man was. It appeared that they were utter strangers to us, not even related to the tenants

or to any one who had worked on the place. So I told E. that I would rather burn my seed than give it away to people who were probably too lazy to raise their own. E. said, "Go it, spiteful;" but I put it to you whether I was not roused to righteous indignation. Do you know—only to give one instance—that last year I gave away handfuls of gladiolus and tuberose roots,—all handsome ones, worth one shilling each, if I had wanted to buy them,—to people who did not once take the trouble to put them in the ground.

If you could but see the miserable bare yards, the tumble-down fences, the rickety houses, the windows with more panes unglazed than glazed, you would wonder. Here are people who have lost nothing since the war, because they had no negroes to lose. In many cases they have bettered themselves one degree, in that they have bought small tracts of land, and now own what formerly they rented. Just after the war land sold for a mere nothing. A neighbour of ours paid a hundred acres to a carpenter for roofing her house. She was a widow and had no money, and there were numbers of such

cases. But where are the tidy cottages with the trim gardens as one sees them in England? Where are the velvety plots of grass? I have heard both English and Virginians say, "Grass won't grow here." It is the want of lime; it is this, that, and the other. How comes it, then, that grass grows where *we* want it to grow?

. . . I believe I have performed my last feat in gardening. I wanted an asparagus-bed to last a lifetime; so I began and dug one row sixty-four feet long. I did it according to my English gardening-book, and it was very orthodox indeed. But I quite broke my back over it, and was obliged to make Dan do the rest of the rows—and oh, how that lazy creature vexed my soul!

. . . Of course you heard of the great panic in New York last autumn. The consequence to the South was that many of the banks broke, and those that did not, suspended for a time. After a while they began to cash cheques for small amounts—*i.e.*, not more than \$30 to one person in one day. It was a great inconvenience on all sides; for a long while

money was so scarce that there was virtually no market for anything whatever in the towns. Supposing they would not find buyers, the sellers stayed away. (Something like the clergyman who did not go to church one rainy Sunday, because he “reckoned thar’d be no congregation.”) One day E., when riding to town, was accosted by an unknown individual who admired Maggie, the mare he was riding, and wanted to strike up a trade. In exchange for Maggie, he would give the horse he was riding, and a cow which gave a gallon and a half of milk *per diem*. E. intimated that he did not wish to trade; whereupon the individual offered him a lien on his house for the loan of \$8 for sixty days! This E. also declined, and rode on.

We have some thought of getting a dear old servant to come out with her husband. It seems so hopeless to try to get respectable house-servants in this neighbourhood. Most people find it a great mistake to bring out English servants, but I think in many instances the mistake is in their treatment of them. For instance, one ought not to expect an English

maid to be as brisk, with the temperature of the working day at 80° or 90°, as she would with it at 60°. One does not expect it of one's self, so why should one expect it of her? Anyhow, we shall not have these people out, even if they wish to come, unless we feel sure we can make them thoroughly comfortable.

. . . Last autumn I had some pleasant rides with E., and hope to have some more this autumn. On one occasion I went to see a rather distant neighbour who lives up the river.

As soon as I dismounted a handsome young quadroon came out and asked us in. I inquired for Mrs M. "Oh, she's sick. But won't you come in and warm?" I went onward to the room which I knew to be the dining-room. A bed was in a dark corner with a patchwork counterpane on it, and on that a bundle rolled up in another patchwork counterpane. A youngish person came forward and spoke to me, who turned out to be a neighbour come in to spend the afternoon. She had good features, but was sallow and white-lipped, as all the women are here beyond the age of twenty.

Her cotton dress was torn, her boots were torn, her hands were dirty, and her hair was rough. She gave me a seat by a roaring fire, and we entered into conversation. I expressed my regret on hearing of Mrs M.'s illness.

"Yes, she's been mighty sick. She's had the new - monia" (pneumonia). I was going further to express my regret at not seeing her, when she went to the bed, stooped over the bundle, and began whispering. The bundle was Mrs M. in a cotton dressing-gown, with the patchwork counterpane over all. I was asked to come over and speak to her, which I did, with a guilty sense of being an intruder. I was wondering at what fire E. could warm himself, when the quadroon girl entered with an armful of wood, followed by E. "Come in, come in and warm," said she. As the negroes have no idea of the proprieties, I exclaimed, "E., you cannot come in. This is a lady's chamber." E. was bowing himself out, begging a thousand pardons, when the ladies both exclaimed, "Oh yes, come in; glad to see you. Come in and warm." We stayed but a short

time, as we knew it would be cold after sunset. As I was taking leave, the invalid drew towards her a red japan-box, which I had taken either for a work-box or a tea-caddy. From this box she extracted one big red apple, which she presented to me, remarking that it was “mighty good.”

E., to whom I gave the apple on our way home, laughed heartily at the idea of an invalid taking apples to bed with her, instead of eau-de-Cologne or aromatic vinegar. We learnt, while chatting by the fire, what the popular idea of public life is in Virginia. I was inquiring for some respectable English people who had settled some time before in that neighbourhood, but had “pulled up stakes” and gone I knew not whither. Mrs M. informed me that she had heard that they had gone as far south as Georgia, and were keeping a store—in Atlanta, I think.

I expressed some surprise, as the man had appeared to know a good deal about farming.

“Yes’m.” (This is always drawled out, with the *s* omitted, so that it sounds like *Yéem*.)

"Yes'm, they are keeping a sto'" (store), "and are doing very well. I shouldn't wonder. Mrs J. always seemed to me like a lady, who would get on better *in public life* than as a farmer's wife."

So now we know that in Virginia public life means "keeping a sto'."

LETTER IX.

IT has been impressed on me with great care that this is a quiet, well-disposed neighbourhood, and that the Virginian is a law-abiding, God-fearing member of “this grand old commonwealth.” Whenever any story of shooting at sight has been mentioned, I have always been reminded that that happened “away down” in Alabama, or in Mississippi, or in South Carolina. Nevertheless, a native Virginian rowdy, Bob Oliver by name, has for months made the neighbourhood round the store unpleasant for purchasers. At this store they have a whisky licence, and there is always a knot of tipsy idlers about the door, Bob Oliver the tipsiest and idlest of them all. When I heard this morning that Bob Oliver

had got a ball in his stomach, I said, “Long may it stay there.” But as they have sent for two doctors to get it out, perhaps my wish may be disappointed. At all events, let us hope that his drinking and shooting may be stopped for a little while.

Last year Bob stabbed the storekeeper at Big Island because he refused him more whisky. It was not known for a time whether the storekeeper would survive. We inquired whether the assassin was in custody. “Oh no”—with a smile at such a tame question. He had gone off. “If the wounded man died, ‘reckon they’d do something to him’—if they could catch him.” The storekeeper recovered, and after a time Bob returned to Big Island, called on his victim, and assured him in the most gentlemanly way that he bore him no malice.

Since then a rival store has been set up, also with a whisky licence, and as every one carries a pistol up there, the neighbourhood has been livelier than humdrum people like. A short time ago, while loafing outside one of the stores,

Bob saw a pig run by ; he whips out his pistol, and says to his fellow-loafers, " I'm going to shoot that pig ; " and does it. Then, turning round, asks whose pig was that.

" Mine," said one.

" What's the price ? "

" Ten dollars."

Whereupon Bob takes a ten-dollar bill from his pocket and pays without more ado, and makes a present of the pig to uncle Pomp, that drunken old preacher, who happened to be passing by.

A day or two since, passing somewhere up the river, Bob saw a cat, and began teasing it. The owner desired him to let the cat alone. Bob, resenting the insult, informed the cat's master that he would be — if he would be told to leave a — cat alone ; and to vindicate his honour, fired two shots at the man. Man dodges round the corner, runs into his house, fetches his pistol, comes back, and puts a ball into Bob's stomach, where, say I, long may it remain.

Plenty of good (?) stories are told about Bob,

all tending to establish the fact that he was a scoundrel from his boyhood. His father died when he was quite young, and left him under the guardianship of a certain Dr S., who found he could do nothing with him, and finally washed his hands of him. This was when Bob was eighteen. He was not heard of for a long time. But "when he was grown" he returned to the neighbourhood, and passed his time in drinking. Standing one day at the entrance of the store, he saw Dr S. passing, and began to hold him up to the ridicule of the bystanders. "Look at that old man," he said, finally; "you don't know how he used to slap me when I was a boy. Now I'm just going to show you how he used to do it," and stepping up to his old guardian, he boxed his ears in face of the crowd. The doctor kept cool. "Yes," he said, "that's just how I used to do. Now I'll show you all what I'm going to do, now he's a man." He took a clasp-knife from his pocket, and with one well-directed blow of his fist, sent the butt-end of the handle into Bob's forehead,

and felled him to the ground ; then he jumped upon him.

It seems to me that the younger generation here is growing up lacking all restraint and totally ignorant of the duty of obedience. An old woman nearly ninety tells me that she always made her boys obey, and if they would not they got a whipping. I remarked that they did not love her the less for it. The devotion of her middle-aged sons to her is delightful to witness. “No, indeed,” she said, with a wise smile ; “it must be a very bad child that would love its mother the less for making it do right. But,” she said, “with regard to my grandchildren it is so different. I am fond of them, naturally ; yet I cannot bear to have them with me, because they never will do as they are told. Their mother does not make them obey her, and complains that they wear her out.”

A clergyman’s wife complained pathetically to me that now in America children were quite beyond the control of their parents at the age of eight ! I said—“How very wicked the parents

must be to let the children get beyond their control!"

She gave me a look of surprise. That view of the matter was one she had never taken.

As far as I can gather, there is no sentiment of veneration in Young America. There is no respect to parents ; no deference to the aged ; no reverent behaviour in church—no consciousness of its being God's house.

I know just one family—a very united family—where the children practise absolute obedience to the widowed mother. She is a miserable, weakly creature, but she never raises her voice, and she never requires to give an order twice. But there is small danger of her being cast aside as a thing of no account, when her children are grown up, like so many American mothers.

This complete absence of restraint acts disastrously in the case of the girls. As they grow up they choose their own associates ; they have their own parties and balls, which they attend without mother or chaperon. Young men call on them at all hours. If the mammas get tired of sitting up, they go to bed ! The girls organise

parties to the ice-cream saloons, where they go, each attended by her “beau,” or her “fellow,” as I heard a young lady once elegantly describe the biped in question. Last year I saw a girl of twelve, who seemed rather a nice, unaffected, childish creature. This year she is a practised flirt, goes to balls, and has a crowd of admirers after her everywhere. And her mother remarks, plaintively, that she cannot get her to take any interest in her studies! It seems cruel to spoil a girl’s youth thus. Surely youth is brief at the best;—why shorten it? This poor child is lovely for the moment; you would take her for nineteen. Her manners have the *aplomb* of a woman of fifty. At the age of twenty she will begin to look old. At twenty-five she will be haggard and sickly-looking, like her mother. For the rest of her life she will be spoken of as having been a great belle—once.

. . . “No manners; customs beastly.” This is what I said on reading a note which was handed to me this morning through the kitchen window. The note was written on a half-sheet of greasy, muddy paper, torn, appa-

rently, from a child's exercise-book. It was written in pencil, and ran thus:—

(Instead of "Madam," or "Dear Madam," my name *tout court*.)

"—— Mrs N. requests that you send her a small piece of light bread to make toast; she is quite sick.—Respectfully, E. N.

"——

At Home.

By Hampton."

Hampton, I suppose, was the name of the white negro who handed in the note, together with a towel to wrap the bread in. Why he could not have sent it by one of the women who were chattering in the log-house, or by the boy, who was squatting over his dinner like the picture of a converted native in a Church missionary report, I cannot tell. Perhaps they declined coming, for fear they might be sent to do something or to get something. That is their way.

I gave the man half the bread I had, and promised a loaf at the next baking. Aunt Caro-

line came to me when he was gone, and with a nod worthy of Lord Burghley, and a whisper worthy of Ristori, informed me that “Mis’ N. got ‘nother boy dis morn’.” And the poor soul has not a friend or relative with her, much less a servant!

If I felt irate at the style of this man’s note, it is because he claims to be, as well as his wife, an F. F. V. Now surely an F. F. V. ought to know better how to word a request. Mrs N. possesses an estate of eight hundred acres, which her husband is supposed to farm, and which she would sell if she could. Mr N. is too fine a gentleman to farm; in other words, too lazy. The frame-house is literally falling to pieces for want of a timely nail; the frost gets into the cellar because the cellar-door is off its hinges; the rain falls on the children in their beds because the shingles that have been blown from the roof have never been replaced; the steps to the front door are rotting away; the gates are falling from their hinges. All this, because there is not money to pay a carpenter, and Mr N. is too “refained” a gentleman to

handle a hammer himself. Mrs N., poor soul, has got rid of her “refainment” since the war. I heard of her as possessing a splendid piano, and performing splendidly thereon; and as having been “elegantly educated.” I found her, practically, a little less *bornée* than most Virginian ladies, and able to rattle off a polka-mazurka or a galop with a tremendous deal of noise, spite of a few dumb notes in her piano. But, if ever she had been as lazy and idle as Southern women are said to have been, how she had expiated her sin!

She had an estate given her by her mother on her marriage. This her husband farmed at a loss, and at last sold it, much run down, to a decent industrious man, who has made money on it, and is now comfortably off. Her present property of eight hundred acres comes to her from her mother, who died not long since. Here for the last few years she has lived and drudged. Since her mother’s death everything has fallen on her, and she has not been able to afford a woman - servant, because her lazy husband could not do without his quota of

farm-hands, and his drinking-bout when he sells his crops.

I go back to my text. There is a frightful lack of manners in this country, and I should feel often more disgusted than I do, only I cannot help seeing that there is a want of *intention*, so that the ill-mannered action is robbed of some of its offensiveness. For instance, a man will say the politest things imaginable, will make his adieux, declaring that his wife is all anxiety to make my acquaintance, and, to give emphasis to his words, spit on the doorstep right in front of me! (as a hint, perhaps, because our drawing-room is not furnished with spittoons).

Do you think I am anxious to make the acquaintance of that man's wife after that?

I have thought sometimes that Virginians get their notions of decency direct from the monks of the middle ages. I will give you an instance or two. During his travels in Virginia, H. came to the house of a Colonel B., to whom he had a letter of introduction. Colonel B. was quite one of the old school of planters, so

lavish in his hospitality that his house was a mere hotel, a resting-place for gentle and simple and curs of all degrees; only differing from an hotel in that the bill was never presented. How pleasant that must have been for the tribe of pedlars that infest this country! H. presented his letter of introduction, and was received with open arms. His horse was taken to the stable, and himself placed on the friendliest footing. (Let me say, *par parenthèse*, that here a Virginian virtue crops out. The people are glad to see anybody, glad to share what they have with anybody, *bonâ fide* traveller or not. I might ride, say, twenty miles from here, and quarter myself upon a Virginian family for a week, if I had the impudence to do such a thing. They would give me the guest-chamber and feed me with the best they had, and never show by their manner that they wished me at Jericho.) Colonel B. assured H. that he was delighted to see him, but—he did not know exactly how to put him up. So many persons had arrived that day that the house was quite full, and he feared it would be impossible to

give H. a room to himself. He had somehow got hold of the notion that Englishmen do not like sleeping six or eight in a bed—a thing to which I believe no Virginian objects. H. disclaimed all desire of having a room to himself. He assured Colonel B. that he had no such aristocratic pretensions. He was an old traveller, and would be quite content with a sofa, a bench, or a blanket, and a corner to lie in. However, when bedtime came he was shown into a room with two other men, Virginians. There were two beds. H. took one; the Virginians tumbled into the other. Next morning H. jumped up to get first wash and the lion's share of water. Now H. has his faults, doubtless, "like any other man," but he is a clean creature. I believe he loves his tub as a German loves his beer. Well, the poor thing was doing his very best—the morning being crisp and frosty—to get a good splash of water over his back from a smallish basin, when one Virginian, who had been regarding him with a sort of gasping wonder, said,—“Good Lord, sir! I wouldn't send the water over my back like that for fifty dollars.”

"Well, sir," said the second Virginian, hiding his face beneath the blankets, "I call it *indecent* for a man to show his back in that way."

That is all the credit H. got for trying to be clean that frosty morning.

Poor old Colonel B. died a bankrupt a few months ago. The only wonder is that he did not do it before.

I have always found the newspapers of a country a great help in illustrating its manners and customs. Here, now, is a bit culled from the New York paper which I have just been reading. The Chancellor of the University of the city of New York, giving the introductory lecture before the medical department, says, among other things: "The medical man penetrates into the home and assumes high control there. Both body and mind of the patient must yield to his guidance. He sends one to Florida, another to Europe, another to India. He controls the eating, drinking, and sleeping. It is therefore no small matter how persons with such relations to us should behave themselves. Correct habits and manners do not grow of

themselves. There must be plenty of trimming and pruning, and even uprooting of the bad. . . . Let me speak of some of the errors that may be corrected, and which, if not uprooted, may greatly injure a practitioner's chances of future success. First, personal uncleanliness. In the sick-room everything should be so presented as to cheer the invalid. Each surrounding should be neat and clean. How can this be so if the breath of the physician be tainted with tobacco, or if his shirt-bosom be soiled with the spattering of eggs, or if he touches the person of his patient with soiled hands?”

One thing is very certain: a great many of the physicians cannot spell, and a great many more would be ruthlessly plucked by an English examining board. The shrewder ones manage to pick up a smattering of knowledge after they begin practice. Some few of the medical schools are stringent in their rules as to attendance on lectures, &c.; but in most, the tyro can, if he pleases, get invested with the title of physician, and emerge, full fledged, to work his will on

the bodies of such patients as may fall into his hands, after a few months' attendance on lectures, and the payment of certain fees.

A propos of sick-rooms, I should like to know whether the nurses up north smoke in the patients' bedrooms as they do down here. Whenever I have heard a woman mentioned as a professional nurse, I have always inquired—"Does she smoke?" and the answer has invariably been in the affirmative. My English neighbour suffered many things because her nurse would not take the pipe out of her mouth even while she was handing her the baby! Remonstrance was useless. The lady's husband told the nurse that he never thought of entering her room until he had got rid of the scent of tobacco, because it annoyed her so much. No matter. Nurse said she had always been used to her pipe, and she was bound to have it. If the lady objected, why, they could pay her her wages and she could go. On my relating this to another English lady, she said—"Oh, my nurse was not as bad as that; she smoked up the chimney."

I like having to do with the old negroes best.

They are all thieves, of course, but they are civil and respectful in their manners. Some of them—those who really did belong to the “first families”—have charming manners. They are generally head-waiters in the hotels, or cooks or nurses in private families. I have observed that many of these people speak English without vulgarity, and without the unpleasant nasal twang that generally disfigures American speech. But the young, untaught negroes, what a trial they are! What uphill work it is to teach them manners! All this summer I have been trying to teach Grace, a girl of sixteen, with a husband and two children, to say “good morning” when she sees me first. We have had a good many workers in the tobacco-field, and she and her mother come into the kitchen to cook for them. It was quite unpleasant to be in the kitchen and see this creature, staring at me with big round eyes wide open, dumb and motionless as a statue. If I took the initiative of saying “good morning” to her, the only answer was a sound from the very depths, like the grunt of a fat porker when half asleep. So

I tried another method. "How is it, Grace," said I one day, "that you never say 'good morning' when you come here? Don't you know that it is very bad manners not to say 'good morning' to the lady of the house when first you see her? I should like to know where you had been 'raised'!"

(This was an insinuation that she had been "raised" by mean whites. There is no greater prick to a negro's pride than this.)

Grace looked positively frightened, but said not a word. Aunt Caroline interposed.

"She wan't raised so. Black folk ain't raised to say 'good morn'" nor noffin'."

"At any rate, you speak civilly when you see me," I rejoined. "Why cannot she do the same? If she doesn't know any better, you might teach her."

Aunt Caroline murmured something, I know not what. I pursued—"What would you think of people that walked into your house and stared at you, and never said a word? Is that the way you black folk behave when you go into each other's houses?"

They both grinned broadly at this.

"Now," I said, "if I were to come to your house, I should say 'Good morning, aunt Caroline,' the very first thing. I should say the same on entering any one's house, were they black or white. And I expect all you black folk to say the same when first you see me in the morning."

I believe my homily was not quite without effect. But one cannot expect a creature that has grown up in a half-savage state (like the majority of those who were children at the time of the surrender) to assume at once—even with an earnest desire to learn—the charming sauvity of, say, our old Toulousan Marie, or the heartiness of our Pyrenean Mingette, still less the stately grace of Florentine Rosa, with her "*baciamano*" on our entering the kitchen to give our daily orders. Now and then Grace would remember and say "good morning," though sulkily. But sometimes she would stare at me in her old disagreeable way. When this happened, I would say nothing; only *look* at her. It is strange how a negro dislikes being looked

at steadily. I do not know whether they have any superstition among themselves resembling that of the Jettatura, but the fact remains ; they cannot bear being looked at steadily. Sometimes even my looking at Grace would have no immediate effect. But on entering the kitchen a second time, I should hear a deep groan proceeding from the tawny statue, followed by "Morn', 'm," pronounced as if her jaws were bound very tightly together. When this was the case I would instantly give a smiling answer, as if only just made aware of her presence.

I might in time have taught her civility— who knows ? But when the tobacco-season was over she ceased coming to the house at meal-times, and it was just as well ; for I found that she was afflicted with kleptomania, and had she continued coming, we should by the end of the summer not have had a single table-knife left. I still went on teaching Dan manners ; and he, being younger, was not such a tough subject. It was hard to prevent him from coming into the parlour with his hat on ; and

harder still to prevent his spitting on the floor "when he felt like it." But for the last offence the quickly following penalty of scrubbing the defiled spot with a brush, soap, and a bucket of water, at last worked a cure.

. . . In default of greater amusement, I have taken up the habit of looking over numbers of American—and more particularly Virginian—newspapers. Sometimes they are a "joy for ever," and sometimes they astonish me not a little. For instance, my eye lights on an obituary notice of a lady, who became converted at such a date, joined, we will say, the Baptist "church," and having lived an edifying life, spent her last breath in saying various beautiful and appropriate things (all apparently noted down by a reporter on the spot), and finally died in the odour of sanctity. I smile a little at the queer phrases and queerer spelling.

I turn to the next column, and behold, quite another odour meets me! A horrible story, full of details such as no careful mother would allow to be placed before her daughter; and this in a so-called family paper of a very religious cast,

full of *goody* stories and extracts of sermons and bits of pious poetry! As it is a “family” paper, one must suppose that the dash of nastiness (like the dead fly in the ointment) was put in to flavour the whole, and make it palatable to the sinners of the family.

One day the mail brought me an American yellow business envelope, addressed with my name simply, as if I were a Quaker. This is a very common practice with tradesmen here. I do not know why they do it, unless it be that they feel themselves raised above their customers when they deny them the prefix of Mrs, Miss, or the affix Esq. to their proper names. On the left-hand corner of this envelope was printed the name of a New York religious serial; also the names of its editor—a Brooklyn personage who has lately made himself notorious—its publisher, and assistant publisher. I asked E. how New York people should know my name and address. He replied that it was the practice for tradespeople to send to the post-offices all through the country for lists of addresses. On opening the envelope, I found,

first, a green leaflet containing the advertisement of a New York bulb-importer and seedsman; then, on a yellow leaflet, a printed form (with blanks for me to fill up) of subscription to a Northern horticultural magazine. Now I confess to a weakness for agricultural and horticultural magazines. I have plenty of English gardening books, it is true; and by this time I ought to know a good deal of gardening in America; but I am always tempted to buy every new publication I see advertised, nevertheless. So I cogitated, on reading the advertisement of this one—"I might as well have it as not. It is not dear, and I might very likely learn something from it that I do not know." Meanwhile E. had taken from the envelope another advertisement in the shape of a tract, and was fuming over it. "Have nothing to do with that thing!" he cried. "I would not have it in the house as a gift. See how they serve the Lord with an eye to business!"

It certainly did look like it. After reading the glowing prospectus of the eminent and notorious editor, I felt that I would prefer to pro-

cure bulbs of some worthy tradesman who put his own name on the outside of his trade envelopes, rather than buy of one who resorted to such theological artifices to conjure customers to his counter. At any rate the mixture is unpleasant. Does the bulb-importer want to bolster up the decaying business of the preacher-editor ? or is it the latter who lends his popular name to bolster up the decaying business of the bulb-importer ? Do they go shares in the proceeds ? or does the bulb - importer stock the reverend So-and-so's garden with Dutch hyacinths in consideration of the use of the said yellow envelopes ? Imagine such a thing as Canon Farrar and Carter & Son going shares in trade envelopes enclosing advertisements for the 'Life of Christ,' in the shape of puffs from the reverend author's own pen, and advertisements of an entirely new celery which is patronised exclusively by the Prince of Wales's gardener, or a list of the latest imported Japanese lilies ! Or suppose an envelope purporting to come from the office of 'Good Words,' and containing — besides a prospectus setting forth the

religious views and scope of that periodical, with its inducements and bribes to agents and clubs—an advertisement of Sutton's last new mammoth turnip! Can you imagine such a business arrangement between an English author and an English tradesman? Hardly, I think.

. . . Still *à propos* of newspapers. I was vexed last week when our New York paper, which contains a vast deal of exceedingly good agricultural and horticultural information, thought proper to mullet its readers of half the agricultural sheet, in order to insert a sermon by the editor of the religious paper which goes shares in trade envelopes with the bulb-importer: in which sermon, being at a loss for some novelty wherewith to tickle the ever-itching ears of his Brooklyn audience, he was good enough to inform them that "Christ was 'emitted' from heaven." It is possible, of course, that he paid for the insertion of his sermon, just as people pay for the insertion of obituary notices and poetry on the deaths of favourite Church members. It may be that this would be as good

a form of advertisement as any, and the proprietor of the paper might say with truth of the money—“*Non olet.*” Who knows?

There is another advertisement, taken at random: “Ask your newsdealer for the ‘Housekeeper,’ and if he does not get it, shoot him dead on the spot.” (This is from a very high-toned Northern paper.)

The following is from a Virginian paper: “The best tobacco is Lone Jack. Go to Carroll’s and get it. It is good enough to make a man strike his own father, or——”

Did I ever send you a paper containing the obituary notice of the lady “whose graceful figure never showed to finer advantage than when she knelt to receive the rite of baptism”? That was in an Episcopal newspaper.

Here is something good in the shape of a testimonial. After a puff of some fifty lines, respecting somebody’s Tonic Elixir and Extract of Beef, comes the following:—

“*London, England.*—The Queen and the Royal Family at this Court use your R. and T. Tonic Elixir and Liquid Extract of Beef, to the

exclusion of all others. It is a wonderful medicine for the stomach, &c., &c., and a great neutraliser.

(Signed) "E. F. J. PURDY,

"*Physician to the Court of St James.*"

After reading this, you, as a loyal subject, are bound to repudiate Liebig's *Extractum Carnis* for evermore, and henceforth "neutralise" yourself as the Queen and the royal family do.

This is merely laughable. There is no malice in it. But what do you think of one paper, which, in order no doubt to please its Fenian subscribers, could insert a letter from its London correspondent full of sneers at the Queen? This I saw when we had not been long in this country, and it was on this wise: The correspondent represented himself as having been to Chiselhurst to pay his respects on New-Year's Day to the ex-Emperor and ex-Empress. He was well received by the ex-Emperor, and invited to remain to *déjeuner* (luncheon). On the table was an enormous game-pie, sent from Windsor by the Queen (as an attempt to con-

form to the French custom of presenting *bonbons* on New-Year's Day). This game-pie was the theme for the witticisms of the ex-Empress and of Princess Anna Murat all through the meal. Conjectures were offered as to whether the Queen made the crust herself, whether the princesses trussed and boned the game, &c., &c. When the pie was opened, Princess Anna Murat helped portions to one and the other, saying—“Princess Beatrice put that in, so you are bound to eat it.” “Here's a piece the Queen put in. Won't you have it?” and so on. All this was given at great length. Perhaps if it were known how these adventurers talked behind her back of the sovereign in whose country they were thankful to find a shelter, British subjects would be less assiduous in their attentions to the Chiselhurst refugees. . . .

Of course, when we saw this letter, we decided on subscribing to some other paper. Perhaps the paper we chose is a shade less scurrilous, because it does not “go in” for Fenian popularity as much as the one I mentioned does. But it is bad enough sometimes. What do you think of a

London letter with the heading—"Mrs Guelph at Home"? To my mind, there is as little wit in calling the Queen "Mrs Guelph" as in calling poor unhappy Marie Antoinette "Widow Capet." The greatest praise ever given the Queen is that she is "that eminently domestic lady"—this in the midst of a paragraph full of sneers. As for the Prince of Wales, one would have supposed a short time ago that the Americans would have to pay the Prince's debts themselves, so much were the papers taken up with the subject. We were told, among other bits of backstairs gossip, of a worthy London wine merchant who (though entreated to do so) had declined to supply the Prince's cellar, giving as an excuse that he could not afford to let his accounts run on for so many years. This story I have seen more than once in the same paper.

. . . When the Czar paid the Duchess of Edinburgh a visit, all the American papers knew it was because he was so angry that his daughter was not helped at dinner before the Princess of Wales, that he came over on purpose to talk to the Queen about it, and about

her having to suffer the indignity of entering or leaving a room after the Princess of Wales ! All this was actually believed, and I had some trouble to persuade certain persons (not wanting in education either) that it could not by any possibility be true ; that the Duchess of Edinburgh's status was fixed in England before there was a Duchess of Edinburgh, and that it could not be altered, even by the reigning monarch, much less by the ruler of a foreign country.

I see that an English mechanic living in New York has written an angry letter to a New York paper, because a few days before it had called George III. "an obstinate old fool." The poor man appears deeply hurt. He says truly, that in England no respectable paper would indulge in such tirades of abuse and impertinence against American presidents, as are habitually written in American papers against our royal family, living and dead. But, says this Englishman, Americans do not honour their own rulers, so how should they honour ours ? And how should they honour

their own? Men who carry their inborn, inbred vulgarity and coarseness with them up to the White House are not the men to be honoured by a nation. It may laugh at their coarseness; it may applaud their “smartness;” it may envy their success; but it will not honour them. So let them keep to their Ben Butlers and Zach Chandlers; and talk of “old” Grant’s last move; of Nellie Grant and her bridesmaids—Susie this, and Molly that; but let them—if they can—leave our Queen and our royal family alone. Such was the tenor of the English mechanie’s letter. It was, I regret to say, weak in its spelling. But for once in a way surely fine sentiments may atone for faulty orthography. Here was a British workman who had (he says) lived six years in New York, and who yet was so loyal that he could not only not bear to have his Queen sneered at, but who had even a tender place in his heart for George III. I should like to shake hands with that man. I regret, as an Englishwoman, that his letter was incorrectly spelt; but perhaps I need not be so sensitive on the subject, as there have been

various instances of Americans—in office—whose orthography was in the last stage of decrepitude. Quite lately a certain Colonel—who is a doorkeeper of the House of Representatives—wrote to a friend (who was so indiscreet as to publish the letter) that he was “a bigger man than old Grant.” And it was only the other day that an honourable senator objected to the application of a certain person for the post of Supervisor of the Census, because he spelt “excellency” with only one “l.” “A person who cannot spell correctly,” wrote the senator, “cannot be fit for such a post.” Very true. But why then did the honourable gentleman put three “e’s” in “necessary,” and two “l’s” in “marshal”? Are senators of the United States above orthography? That is what no foreigner can understand. Indeed I am “free to confess” that, long as I have been here, there are many points on which I do not understand Americans—just as many, perhaps, as there are on which Americans cannot understand English people. . . . *A propos de bottes*, what do you suppose I saw in a small manual

on etiquette? “Do not tear and bite your bread at dinner. The English use their bread to wipe their knives and fingers on.”

There was also advice to a young man, how, when, and where he was to kiss a young lady. As I am not a young man, I did not make a note of it; but I remember one item, which was, that he was not to kiss any young lady without her consent; from which we may infer that kissing may be had “by favour” among American young ladies. A lady told me once that she made it a rule never to allow any liquor of any kind—not even champagne—at her daughters’ parties. I asked her why. Because, she said, she had observed that at parties where wine and whisky were to be had, the young men often took too much, and then they forgot their manners, and would be kissing the girls when they were taking them home. Then the girls would complain to their fathers or brothers, and that of course “made trouble.” She was determined that no “difficulty” should ever arise which could be traced back to her house, so she had made that rule, and intended

to stick to it. ("Difficulty" means "shooting.")

I have a number of 'Punch' which makes me feel sentimental whenever I look at it. In it is the prettiest picture—no caricature at all, but a real picture—entitled "Pretty Manners in Humble Life." Oh, if anybody would make such a pretty bow to me, would I not make just such a pretty curtsey to him! How much pleasanter would it be to be addressed as the gallant scavenger is addressing the polite apple-woman, than to hear constantly—bawled across the fence at the distance of half an acre—"Oh! whar's Mr E.?" "Whar's yer brother?"—from a black or a mean white, or an F. F. V. I have already proclaimed that if anybody takes that number of 'Punch' for pipe-lights, my displeasure shall be upon him. I shall put it away and keep it till I get back to *la belle France*, the only country where they know how to bow or curtsey and carry politeness into the smallest details of life;—the only country where they know how to cook their food. Oh for the pears of Normandy, and the

grapes of Languedoc, and the olives of Provence! Oh for the *purées* and stews and *fricandeaux*, and the good wholesome wine that did its duty by the stomach and never got into the head! I feel so utterly home-sick that I will write no more.

LETTER X.

February 187—. . . Yesterday Dan came in grinning from ear to ear. “Oh Miss Ma'y, do you know Mrs N. is dead?” But for the grin of negro delight at something new I should not have believed him. I had called at the house less than a week before—taking a loaf of white bread, as she liked my way of baking—and had not heard of her being worse. I did not see her on that occasion, for as soon as I was told that she had “company” I declined entering her room. The time before, I had gone in when asked to do so, and found nine people there. Myself and the niece, who entered with me, made eleven. Eleven people in the room of a patient suffering from capillary bronchitis! I was told afterwards that “everybody” went to see her because there was

a general impression that she could not last long. If "everybody" had taken turns to come and nurse her, and keep her ill-behaved, noisy children away, and see that she had proper appetising food from the beginning of her wretched illness, the poor woman might be alive now. She would not have lived even as long as she did but for her niece, a delicate girl of seventeen, who came to her as soon as she knew of her miserable condition, and has nursed her to the last; besides cooking, doing the house-work, looking after and teaching the children. . . . It seems that she sank very rapidly, much to her husband's astonishment. He told a neighbour that he would have sacrificed his best team of mules rather than lose her. This is greatly to his credit, when one considers how difficult it is to get a thoroughly well-broken team, and how easy it is to get a wife for the asking. . . .

Later in the day we received an invitation to the funeral, which was to be "preached" by Mr ——, a Methodist ex-preacher, on the following day. The invitation was written on a torn sheet of paper, and was carried round the neigh-

bourhood by a nigger on horseback. The poor soul was to be buried in the garden, by the side of her baby. . . .

E. and I walked to the house through the fields. The road was crowded with people, on horseback and in waggons, carts, and every form of conveyance. On the lawn in front was a lounging crowd of men and boys, and women were entering the house by twos and threes. E. joined the crowd of men, and I followed the women. Every door in the house seemed open. I stood hesitating, when a person in a black bonnet and woollen shawl, who stood at the door of what had been Mrs N.'s room, came forward and invited me to "come in and warm." I took her for an exceedingly respectable monthly nurse, but she turned out to be the Methodist preacher's wife. I entered. There were already many women in the room; two girls were arranging their head-dresses at the glass; some were peeping out of the window at the new-comers. Miss S., the niece, in a pretty grey dress and lilac ribbons, came forward to speak to me. I recognised two or three whom

I knew, and presently I became aware that I was the only person present in mourning attire. Everybody—with a few honourable exceptions—was as gay as cheap flowers and flaunting scarves and shawls could make them. I was stared at from head to foot, for no better reason, I suppose, than that I was in mourning. And this, remember, was a lady's funeral! . . . The bed on which I had last seen the invalid was made up; the other was unmade, apparently, and had a sheet spread over the mattress. Seeing several girls lay their hats on this bed, I supposed the corpse to be in some other room. But presently Miss S. said—"Would you not like to see her?" She drew down the sheet, and there the poor soul lay, dressed in faded velvet, with net frills at the throat and wrists! Such a sight it was, that skeleton of yellow wax! so old, so worn out, and hardly thirty-seven yet, that I fairly cried for pity; knowing, too, how many Southern ladies have been in as bad, or in a worse case even, thanks to this cruel, fratricidal war! . . . Soon the room became crowded, and people, gathering courage from

numbers, began to talk in subdued tones at first, but soon got louder, till a buzz of conversation filled the room. One girl stood with her riding-whip in her hand, striking it against her skirts as she spoke, and looking so exceedingly jolly that I could have boxed her ears. There was an English lady present who felt the incongruity of the surroundings as much as I did, and by one consent we edged away from the crowd into a corner behind a small table. On this table was spread, by way of cover, a newspaper; on that lay a big Bible, and on the Bible a small Prayer-book. So I hoped, seeing that, that we might hear a chapter read, and the beautiful Church service, instead of some dreadful extempore praying and preaching. Presently the doctor came in, followed by the miller, who is also the undertaker. There was some whispering, and then chairs were brought and placed by the bed. Mrs —— and I now tried to leave the room, but were prevented by those in front, who did not move on. While we were waiting, the door opened, and the miller, the grave-digger, and E.'s best plough-

man—a white man—entered, bearing the coffin. Then the miller proceeded to unfold the winding-sheet in a business-like way, and the poor corpse was lifted up and placed in her coffin—gently enough—by the men. All this while the door remained half open, and somebody with a handkerchief to his mouth was peeping through the chink. I did not know who it was, with hair so brushed, and such a new blue coat on. It proved to be the widower, looking fifteen or twenty years younger than his poor dead wife. However, he could not help that, I suppose. . . . Then there was going to and fro, and a brightly dressed young woman walked with a sprightly step to a closet and brought out a quantity of cotton wool for a pillow for the coffin. Then the widower and children came in to take a last look ; and a dozen nigger women and children and a few men, all dressed in their best, filed in and looked at their former mistress. Their demeanour was solemn and awestruck, and much more in keeping with the occasion than that of the mean whites present, who pushed and shoved and

stood on tiptoe to see the sight better. Then the miller screwed down the coffin-lid, and stood with his hands folded as if he were going to offer up a prayer. He must be a useful man thus to be able to minister to the living and the dead; so I prepared myself to hear him. However, before he said anything, a mean-looking man, who had been coming in and out of the room while these last offices were being performed, now entered with a tiny Prayer-book in his hand, and began to read the Burial Service. This was the ex-Methodist preacher (somebody told me he was a bishop in West Virginia before the war). I hope it is not true that he is in the habit of borrowing such commodities as bacon and corn from his neighbours, and when they ask for the equivalent, after patient waiting, telling them "the Lord will repay them." I never yet saw a man with such a thoroughly "whipped" expression. What were my feelings on hearing our beautiful Church service read out by this man! Reading is a wrong term. He could not read. He tripped and stumbled at every long word,

making his own punctuation, emphasising every pronoun and preposition, and all in a tone of such stolid, stupid apathy, that one longed for him to stop. It really was more like hearing a child stumble through a lesson in some foreign language of which he had not mastered the meaning, than anything else. There was no comfort in it for those of us who were Episcopilians, and I am sure there was no edification in it for those who were not. The gaily dressed girls who had shown symptoms of listening, soon began to stare about and make notes of each other's attire. Evidently the words had no more meaning for them than they had for the ex-Methodist preacher. At a certain part of the service he paused, and said: "These solemn services will be continued at the grave, to which we will now repair." The men went forward bearing the coffin, and we followed. A few walked decorously, two and two. But as we walked on, some rushed forward, and others ran back to join the friends with whom they wished to walk, so that the procession soon became a mob. One boy rushed across the

ploughed ground, to make a short cut to the grave, which was at one end of the garden, and his mother called out, loud and threatening, “You come along here!” A crowd of men had joined the procession as it left the house, and these stood round the grave, all with their hats on, E. being the solitary exception. Not a soul joined in the Lord’s Prayer; not a soul said “Amen,” except we English people. The service over, we returned to the house, and again the women all crowded into the room where the corpse had been. The fire was made up by a negro woman, chairs were set in a circle, and everybody was invited to “come and warm.” Miss S., the niece, lay down on the bed and cried bitterly. I went to her and said what I could to comfort her. The rest took no notice of her, but began talking and making engagements. “Haven’t seen you for quite a while.” “You will come up right soon and stop the night, won’t you?” and so on, on all sides. Presently one and then another rushed out of the room to see if her horse was ready; soon there was a knot of girls and

women in the passage, talking and laughing loudly. The negro woman came in at that moment, and I inquired whether she had seen E.—for the scene jarred greatly on my feelings, and as I could not prevent these people's indecent behaviour, I wished to get away from them. The woman answered that he was still “at de grabe wid de oder gentlemen.” She gave me the information that our boy Dan (who had that morning had a tooth drawn by the miller) had been keeping his mouth open contrary to her advice, and was now “cryin’ an’ hollerin’ wid de toofache.” Then she proceeded to strip the bed of the sheets used for the corpse, and to make up the bed afresh.

E. said to me as we left the house—“For heaven’s sake, let us get home without any of that noisy lot !” So we managed, and got away into the fields, and walked home quietly. E. was thoroughly disgusted with what he had seen ; still more when I told him how the corpse had been laid in the coffin in the sight of that hard-eyed, staring, indifferent crowd ! He declared—and I agreed with him—that this

country might do to live in, but that it was a "beastly" country to die in, and we would neither of us die in it if we could help it—not we! "My dear," I said, as we got home, "if I do die here, don't let a crowd come round me, gaping at me as I am dying, and staring and nudging and whispering when I am put in my coffin. Bury me yourself and plant a peach-tree over me. And rather than have that preacher man to read the service over me, bury me like a dog in a hole; because I couldn't stand it. I should 'feel like' getting up and telling him how to pronounce 'terrestrial' and 'celestial.'"

LETTER XI.

ONE morning when sitting with Mrs W. in her verandah, we saw two women enter at the gate and walk up the steep path leading to the house. One, young and pale, wore a pink flounced cotton dress, grey cotton gloves, large green ear-rings and brooch, and a faded sun-bonnet. The other, very tall, thin, and yellow, also wore a flounced cotton, with a clean white apron and dirty sun-bonnet. "Who is this yellow woman?" I asked. Mrs W. did not know, but supposed they were some of the poor whites of the neighbourhood with something to sell. We waited for events to develop themselves. Opposite Mrs W. these people stood still, and the yellow woman said, "My name is Mistress Momon. You're Mis' W., I s'pose." Mrs W. replied laconically, and as

they stepped on the verandah she got up and gave them seats. The elder woman fidgeted with her hands and smoothed down her dress with much care before taking her seat. Perhaps she expected Mrs W. to come forward and shake hands with her *à l'Américaine*. Then there was a long silence. I rocked myself, and Mrs W. rocked herself, and dandled baby, each of us thinking, "What can these women want?" At last, tearing off her bonnet, Mistress Momon burst out with, "Been mighty rainy weather!" "Very," we replied; and baby laughed. Instantly Pink cotton pulled off her grey gloves and her faded bonnet, and asked baby to come to her. This brought up the inquiry, "That's your baby? Is she a good child?" No more seemed likely to be said, so, as I did not see any fun in a Quaker's meeting, I came away, leaving the women to unfold their business whenever the spirit moved them. This was about half-past ten. Captain W. was helping E. that day in the tobacco-field, and dined with us, going home some time in the afternoon.

In the evening, as soon as the sun was set,

I took Mrs W. some honey I had promised her. (I could not venture to carry it by day, because the bees smelt it and came after it in thousands. I lost all the honey I took from one hive, owing to their finding out where I had put it.) I heard, on arriving at the W.'s, what these mean whites had wanted. They had remained there, Mrs W. said, and there was no getting rid of them till Captain W. returned. They had business with the Captain, they said, and they would not leave a message. "I believe," said Mrs W.—who had been frightfully bored, as you may suppose—"that if my husband had stayed away all night they would have waited till he came back." When Captain W. came in, he lost no time in asking their business, you may be sure. Then it came out that the object of their visit was to borrow five dollars of him "to pay a debt." He declined, and hinted that some of their neighbours and country people might be able to oblige them. "Why," the woman said, "I thought all the English who came here were wealthy! As for the folks 'round here,' they are of no account; they

couldn't raise a dollar among them." She tried to persuade him to lend them five dollars, assuring him he would never miss it. What was five dollars to him? Seeing that he was obdurate, she said, "Well, if you won't lend me five dollars, will you give me a pipeful of tobacco?" which he did, and got rid of them. I think the country people must imagine the English to be wealthy, because we usually pay at once for what we buy; whereas a Virginian countryman will never let a dollar go out of his pocket if he can get what he wants by barter—"trade," as it is called.

August 17, 187—.—One day this month I was in the sitting-room writing when I heard M. parleying with a nigger. I went out, and found a man employed by General L. who was asking for E. E. had ridden down to the post-office, so I desired the man to tell his business. He wanted a letter written to a lady, and was willing to pay for it. And he had come to Mas'r E. because he understood Mas'r E. could write plain, and wouldn't fool de folks; and some of dem white gentlemens dey didn't write plain,

an' dey wrote down things to fool de folks, an' he didn't want no foolin,' 'cause 'twas a mighty pertikler bisiness he'd got to write about. I informed him that I wrote letters for myself frequently, and that I could write as plain as Mas'r E., so that if he was in a hurry I would write his letter, if he liked. He came in, with much scraping and bowing, and flourishing of a very shiny black hat. Then he produced a very large sheet of ruled paper, and a yellow envelope, which he handed to me, giggling. I looked at him sternly. "Yellow envelopes are not used in writing to ladies," I said.

The nigger was taken aback for a moment. I continued—"What kind of lady do you want to write to? Is she a white lady? Because you begin your letter with 'Madam,' if so; but if not, you can begin as you please."

"Yas, 'm, it's a cullud lady, 'm," and the nigger giggled worse than ever.

"Where do you live?" I said, with a countenance as stern as that of a graven image.

"Gen'l L.'s."

"What is the name of his place?"

Nigger didn't know. It was away up yonder in the mountain.

At last we began. "Miss Charlotte Ford," and again the nigger giggled like a girl behind his pocket-handkerchief.

I pointed to a chair opposite me. I felt as if I must do something to stop that nigger's giggling. "Sit down in that chair," I said, "and go on. Don't keep me waiting."

He sat down and left off giggling. "Make haste," I said. "What more have you to say besides 'Miss Charlotte Ford'?"

"If you love me as I love you, nothing shall cut our love in two."

I wrote that down. Then I said, "Go on." By this time the giggling fit had spent itself.

"I take up my pen to write you these few lines."

"I cannot write that," I interposed. "*I* am writing for you. *I* have the pen, not you. You could not write with it if you had it in your hand."

"That's so, mistiss." Then he tried again. "'I seat myself——'"

“ Go on,” I said, inexorably.

“ ‘ To write you these few lines, hoping you are well.’ ”

“ Go on.”

“ ‘ If you love me as I love you, nothing shall cut our love in two.’ ”

“ That is English poetry,” I observed ; “ but as you have made me write it down once, I need not write it again.”

“ Yes, marm.” But now the nigger was non-plussed.

“ Go on,” I said again.

“ Now, won’t you say something ? You fix up the rest with your po’tries.”

I declined. After a great deal of hesitation he brought out some words to the effect that she had been much in his mind since last he saw her. I wrote that down, and again said
“ Go on.”

“ Thar an’t no mo’. Now, won’t you fix up somethin’ ? ”

“ Could not do it on any account. How do you wish to finish ? ”

“ ‘ Your feshonate Aaron Humfrey.’ ”

I inquired if he were going to be married to Miss Charlotte Ford.

He didn't know.

Was he engaged? No, not yet. He was thinking about it. Then I supposed he had fallen in love with this girl. He didn't know. She was a mighty fine gal; mighty handsome gal, anyhow. And she could cook.

"But you are not engaged yet, at all events?"

"No, mistiss; not yet, 'm."

Then I informed him solemnly that a gentleman never wrote "your affectionate" to a lady until he was engaged to be married to her, and that the letter must end thus: "I remain, your most devoted, obedient, humble servant."

"Yes, 'm, that sounds well," said Aaron. "Now I knew you could fix it up right. There's a lot more paper to write on; now do write some o' your po'tries."

"Quite impossible," said I.

When the letter was enclosed in its envelope, and addressed to the "cullud lady," Aaron remarked, looking admiringly at a sheet of man-

uscript which I was copying, that he supposed I was writing a letter to my beau.

"That is not a letter, and it is not written to any beau," I replied. But I saw he did not believe me. I have not been asked to act as amanuensis since, which I attribute to the fact of my declining so sternly to add to Aaron's eloquence by "fixing up some of my po'tries."

Some time since, E. gained the reputation of being able to track any nigger's footsteps. This was because, when Alick, that civil-spoken yellow nigger, stole a quantity of tobacco belonging to a white tenant, E., with the white man in question, went straight to the house where Alick was living and got back some of the tobacco. The woman of the house thought they had a warrant to take Alick into custody, and kept them waiting at the closed door till Alick had had time to get out of the window at the back of the house.

I think the white man was more angry at the fact of the door—a nigger's door—being fastened against him, than at the theft, though that was bad enough. Twenty pounds of his

best tobacco ! If he had taken a bunch or two of the good, or a few pounds of the primings ! But to take his best yellow tobacco !

“Ah, them yalla niggers is a mean lot !” said the white man. It was really he who tracked the nigger, as far as there was any tracking. But E. got the credit of it, and I am sure we shall not object, if petty thefts become less frequent in consequence. Since then E. has gained the reputation of being the nigger’s friend. In this latter instance he really did do something : he prevented a white man—a very mean white—from cheating a poor foolish negro. The white man, T., had let a little log-cabin and plot of land to the negro Martin, the agreement being that the negro was to work out his rent, thirty dollars, by giving T. so many days’ work, at fifty cents per day. The end of the year came ; the negro imagined he had worked out all his rent, when the white man made a demand on him for the rent which he declared to be still owing. The negro came to E. in great trouble, and tried to explain things in a stupid, muddled way. Fortunately this white

man had borrowed E.'s yoke of oxen and the ox-cart on certain days, of which E. had kept an account. Also there appeared on various occasions in E.'s diary, the sentence—"Martin away working for T." which was very good evidence in the nigger's favour. E., for his own satisfaction as well as Martin's, made out the account of the days he had been working for this man, and found that, so far from his owing T. anything, it was T. who was indebted to him. E. was roused at this, and determined if he could to see the man righted. So, as Martin had received a summons to appear at the petty sessions on a certain day in January, E. rode there on that day to act as Martin's counsel. Never was such a jack-of-all-trades as he !

The petty sessions were held at a blacksmith's shop about eight miles from here. Two justices of the peace were present, and composed the court. And while the court was sitting the blacksmith's work went on.

This is how the court sat. One of the justices hitched himself on to the end of an old box ; the other fetched a chair. Then the com-

plainant, T., hitched himself on to the other end of the box, and they all chewed awhile; and E. looked on, standing. Martin being the defendant, and also a black man, stayed outside, hitched himself on to the window-sill, and looked in. The first justice, after an interval, remarked that there were a few other cases to dispose of, but as the parties did not appear, he reckoned they "mout" as well begin. Thereupon T. produced the contract, or agreement, respecting the rent of Martin's cabin, amount of land to be cleared, wood cut, &c. This, to begin with, was drawn up in an extremely unfair if not illegal manner, and E. took occasion to point this out to the justices. The agreement, together with various dirty scraps of paper, dignified by the name of "dockyments," were passed round and commented on by the justices and E.; and then various questions were put to Martin, who, as well as T. and E., were sworn—"cussed," E. called it when relating the affair. Why E., who was there as defendant's counsel, should have been sworn, is more than I can tell, or he either. He remarked that it

did not hurt him. But it did hurt the black man. The poor wretch must have fancied that the oath and the book together made a sort of charm, or “trick,” as the negroes call it. Now I really believe that any one could kill a negro by persuading him he was “tricked.” As soon as Martin was sworn, he lost his head, and contradicted himself over and over again from sheer fright, making, as E. saw, a very unfavourable impression on the two justices. T., as the examination went on, constantly interposed with—“Now mind what you are saying. Remember you are on your oath!” which added to Martin’s fright and confusion. E., seeing that things were turning badly for him, began to examine. (I don’t think this was a very regular proceeding; but neither should we call it regular for a justice to sit on the end of a box and chew.) So E. began thus: “You had my steers hauling corn for T. for a day and a half, at such a date?” “Yes.” “Then you had my steers hauling oats for T. on such and such days?” “Yes;”—and so on, the justices noting down as they went on how many days’ work

had been performed, and consequently how many dollars were to be deducted from the amount T. alleged to be still owing. The upshot of the affair was, that Martin was adjudged to pay only eight instead of the twenty odd dollars which T. demanded. Had he not contradicted himself so completely, E. thought Martin would not have been adjudged as owing a single cent. Martin declared that he had paid certain moneys down to T., but he was not clear as to the precise amount, and he had no receipt to show, so his declaration went for nothing.

T., the mean white, was in a great rage because Martin was adjudged to owe him only eight dollars. He declared that it was all in consequence of E.'s interference. (And so of course it was.) We were told that he was drinking more than ever, and that he would sit whole afternoons at his door with his gun across his knees, ready to shoot E. if he passed that way. M. wished E. very much to carry a pistol, but E. refused. M. and I did not, however, feel quite comfortable till T. had left this part of the country; for though such shooting does not

happen every day, still instances do occur of men being shot at sight by those who consider themselves aggrieved.

I remember that, on the same day E. rode off to attend the petty sessions at the blacksmith's shop, we had a call from an English stranger, who introduced himself as a captain in the Royal Engineers. He was on his way to the house of a friend, but had missed the road. We treated him courteously, and gave him chicken-pie for luncheon. He apologised for having no card, and wrote his name down on a piece of paper torn from his pocket-book. When E. saw the name, he remarked that for once in our lives we had been entertaining—not an angel unawares, but a rogue and impostor! This Captain K. was no captain at all, but a sergeant who had just served his term of imprisonment in Newgate for embezzling money belonging to his regiment. He had been at various hotels, had stayed as long as he could obtain credit, and had invariably forgotten to settle his bill. He went from our house to the house of two old Indian officers, who for some days, at all events,

were quite as much taken in as M. and I had been. Unfortunately they had no Army List, and we only had a Navy List. Captain C. knew a Captain K. who had a brother in another regiment, besides other members of the K. family who were in various regiments. This man gave himself out, I believe, as the brother. It came out afterwards that his name really was K. He was the *mauvais sujet* of the K. family, and had enlisted ; but had behaved well enough till he rose to be sergeant, when he embezzled money which belonged to the regiment. “Did you not notice how very short his hair was cut ?” an acquaintance remarked, who knew all about him. It was short, certainly ; but not shorter than many men keep theirs during the hot weather. The last time E. had his hair cut, he had it trimmed till he looked like an escaped convict, or a lunatic ; so I consider that sign goes for nothing. This is the only time we have been “taken in ;” but the effect of it has been to make us feel very chary of extending more than the obligatory “cup of cold water” to English strangers. I do not feel it much comfort to

know that various other persons besides ourselves were also "taken in" by the ex-sergeant in his peregrinations through the Piedmont district. The last we heard was that he had gone to Cuba to join the insurgents. Long may he remain there!

LETTER XII.

June 17, 187——I am thoroughly stupefied with the heat; too much so even to chronicle our small doings. I am sleepy, too, having got up at four o'clock for several mornings to pick the cucumber and melon bugs off the plants. My English melons, "Lord Napier" and "Queen Emma," are nearly all eaten up, so that in future I shall keep to the American sorts, which are more robust. By way of cooling down, let me tell you of our last winter. We had very pleasant autumnal weather up to the 9th of January, when the wind changed to the west. It blew furiously for a few hours, by which time everything was freezing. On the morning of the 10th, ice was inside the house, and despair in the dairy. The weather continued more or less abominable till the middle of February. Some

nights the thermometer went down to zero! Ours is the warmest, lightest house, though built of wood, for many a mile round—I might say for many a country round—yet we felt the cold bitterly. How our neighbours fared through it I cannot tell. I have as yet seen no Virginian house in the country at all adapted for keeping out the cold; nor is the usual dress of the country suited thereto. There is not such a thing as a pair of men's lined leather, kid, or buckskin gloves to be got, as far as I know, in Virginia. If we want such things we must send to New York. The women wear cotton dresses all the year round, as I think I told you. I do not speak only of mean whites, but of ladies. I doubt if many know the luxury of a flannel petticoat. Of course in the towns, where the men are making an income, the women have their furs, and lined gloves, and flannel petticoats, and every other comfort. But I am referring only to the country, where the people have to make their living out of the land. As for us, we went about during these freezing weeks clothed in flannel from head to foot, and

kept the stoves going full blast night and day. Yet on some days it seemed as if nothing we could do would warm the house. Poor M. shivered and shook, and wished herself back on the shores of the Mediterranean, or in Florida. Of course we had small mercies to be thankful for. Who has not? For instance, had this freezing weather happened at Christmas time, we should have been left alone to do all our own cooking and cleaning; as from Christmas Eve to New-Year's Day is the universal nigger holiday. I do not know how people manage who have sick persons or babies in the house. . . .

About this time a former slave of old Mrs L.'s died. Her name was Phœbe. She was nearly eighty, quite blind, and a hideous object. As she was Dan's grandmother we heard all about the event, which was a source of great excitement to all the negroes in the neighbourhood. Before she died Dan was sent to Lynchburg in the snow to fetch aunt Delphy Ann, who had a comfortable place in that neighbourhood; but aunt Delphy Ann did not see the good of coming. "If I had come, de ole lady

couldn't ha' seen me," she explained to me afterwards. The old creature lingered for some time; but at last Dan came back one Monday morning from the tumble-down cabin where his aunt lived, saying, with a grin, "Gran'ma's dead." Was she really dead? E. asked.

"Well, not quite. But she said good-bye to us all a while agone, so she's bound to die before long." He reckoned that aunt Car'line would have to go to Big Island if it didn't snow to get a *smouten* (shroud); and he reckoned that Mr Jones (the miller) would let them have a coffin. Some time in the course of the morning aunt Caroline appeared. She walked into the log-house where E. was busy at the carpenter's bench, and squatted by the fire.

After a while E. said—"Well, how are you all?"

"Well, de ole lady's dead."

E. made a proper rejoinder, and there was a pause. Then with a burst—"Oh Mas'r E.," she said, "ha' you got any two dollars, 'cause I bound to go an' get a *smouten* for de ole lady?" She got her two dollars and went off, walking

five miles to the store in the snow, poor old soul ! Dan went off too, first coming to me to beg for flour and sugar. Coffee they had already begged from some one else. Next day Dan came back to do his scullery-work, and informed me, with solemn joy, that "the house was full of folks." The weather remained so cold that the grave could not be dug for a day or two ; and all that time "the house was full of folks." In this neighbourhood the whites allow the negroes to use the outer portion of their graveyard. In this respect, at least, no Civil Rights Bill is wanted here. I suppose that even the most rabid Abolitionist would not dispute the right of a Southerner to his own private graveyard. The public graveyard is only used by the poorer sort who have no land of their own. After the funeral Dan came to E. to ask him to write a letter to tell his mother to come up, and bring four dollars along to pay for the funeral. "And please put the letter in a black-bordered envelope, that it may go quicker." I do not know whether the negroes object to mentioning their dead relatives by name ; but I observed

that, after aunt Caroline came back to her work, she never mentioned her mother, though she says just what she likes to me without restraint, and will chatter fast enough sometimes. She was spoken of by the white people as having been an affectionate daughter, because she gave her mother the warmest place by the fire, and stopped up with rags all the holes in the wall on the side where she sat. One of our neighbours wished to engage her for a few weeks once, to remain all night in the house, and would have paid her well for it. Aunt Caroline refused, saying that if she were away "dey wouldn't give de ole lady one bit of supper." "Dey" meant her daughter Sally and her niece Charlotte, and her married daughter Grace, with a crowd of grandchildren and nieces and nephews of all sizes, idle and ragged, and far too lazy to pick blackberries for us at a penny a quart. Theirs is such an odd kind of laziness. Many of them would walk to town, sixteen miles off, for a mere trifle; but it is the hardest thing to get them to do a steady day's work. . . . One day aunt Caroline wanted to go to town

for some medicine for her daughter Sally, who, having been given up by the doctors of the neighbourhood, would try the remedies of an old negro herbalist called uncle Scipio. I begged her to wait and see whether some waggon might not be going down, so as to save herself such a fatiguing walk. But she was determined, she said, "to go on de legs de ole Master gib her." And away she went. "De ole Master," of course, means God.

I have been jotting down some of the odd phrases I hear. Wash, the nigger (his full name is George Washington Barber), was ploughing one day with the oxen outside the garden fence, and I heard him talking to them thus:—

"Now then, Buck and Ben, what makes you all don't come up?"

"What dat cow cryin' for?"

"Now den, Ben, what you crying for?"

"Look at him now! Come up in dar!"

"Look at Ben! What you doin', Ben?"

E. had heard that the turkey-buzzard (so called because its bronze markings somewhat resemble those of the wild turkey) has no reg-

ular roosting-place, but remains at night just wherever its food happens to be. It subsists entirely on carrion. Wishing to make certain of the fact, E. sat one evening for a considerable time watching half-a-dozen buzzards which were sitting on a fence. All at once they rose and flew away. E. asked Wash if he thought they were gone to roost. "No," said Wash. "I reckon they's only *prombinading*. They'll be back after a while."

My friend Mrs B. inquired of her cook as to the health of a relative who had been seriously ill. "Oh," said the cook, "he's a heap better this morning. He's quite careless and despairing."

The women say "cupping" instead of "milking;" but they say "she done milked." "Done" is a favourite word. "He done gone." "She done eat." "He done quit." "He done dead." "De surrenda" means "the verandah;" and a "gospel poach" means a "Gothic porch." "I did so once" is rendered, "I used to could." A (white) Virginian boast is, "I was as drunk as five hundred." A Virginian invitation,

"Won't you come by and dine?" "I do admire" means "I wonder."

. . . This summer we have been rather more troubled by tramps than heretofore. Most of them are white men; but occasionally a negro comes by and asks for work. It generally happens, both in the case of negroes and white men, that they come by asking for work just as a meal-time is approaching. Of course we have no work for them. Then they tell a tale of the many miles they have walked, fasting, in search of work. Naturally they get a meal, after that. Only on two occasions have I felt that the kindness was not wasted. In one case it was an Alsatian who had walked all the way from Richmond in search of employment at stone-cutting. In the other it was an Irishman who had been some time in the country, but whose brogue was as fresh and pure as though he had been a new arrival. We gave him supper, bed, and breakfast, and a trifle to get himself a dinner at the next halting-place. And I am sure we ought to have paid

him many dollars for the blessing he lavished on the crops. But all these *convives* are not of such a generous temperament. Pedlars I have a great horror of. They are mostly saucy, ill-mannered fellows. E. once intercepted a couple of them who were on the point of entering the dining-room. They asked him to buy spectacles. He declined. Then they observed casually that it was about dinner-time, and asked for something to eat. I cut two large platefuls of cold pork and bread for them, and told aunt Caroline to make up the fire in the log-house, and tell them to sit there while they ate, as the day was rainy. She came back presently, grinning. "Dey say dat meat too fat, an' dey wants butter."

I sent her back to say there was no butter for them. She described afterwards how they took my refusal. "Dey jes' shove dat meat off deir plates on to de table, an' jes' eat a little piece o' bread, an' den dey gits up an' go 'long, an' nebber say good morn' nor nothin'. Nebba see sech folks!"

A Virginian lady to whom I related the in-

cident, said—"I have no use for those Dutch pedlars. It does not matter what you give them, they are sure to ask for something else. I have known them refuse coffee, and say they preferred tea. I have not the slightest use for any of them."

These fellows were Pennsylvanian Dutch—*i.e.*, descendants of the Germans who first settled in Pennsylvania. They speak a mixture of bad English and broken-down German. We may think ourselves lucky that they did not come at nightfall and demand to be taken in for the night. I have known such instances, and, strange to say, the demand has been granted, in spite of the terror felt by the ladies of the house at having doubtful characters sleeping under the same roof with them. I asked once, was there no cabin into which such undesirable guests could be put? But they said that they would feel even more terrified at the idea of such persons being outside prowling about, and perhaps setting fire to a barn or wheat-stalk to mark their sense of having been treated as of no account. The master of the house in

this instance was an old man. A Baltimore lady told me that, last summer, Maryland was completely overrun by tramps. A friend of hers went into the country for change of air after a severe illness, but returned in a week, worse rather than better, from the constant frights she had suffered owing to the insolence of tramps. They would come by at meal-times, put their heads in at the window, and demand food. They would even enter the house and seat themselves in the midst of the family. I asked—"Was there no able-bodied man among the party who could have ordered them out? Was there no such thing as a pistol in the house?"

Oh yes, there was an able-bodied man, and there was no lack of firearms, but as the tramps were all armed too, it was useless to make a show of resistance. If they had been refused the food on the dining-table, they would have taken it. If the master of the house had shown his pistol, they would have shown theirs too. And a woman would rather give her dinner, and her silver spoons into the bargain, than

have her husband shot by a tramp. Down here, it seems, the tramp proper has not come yet. The tramp proper does not even ask for work, as a matter of form, before ordering you to give him his dinner. I hear of parties of tramps in Pennsylvania interrupting picnics and school feasts, eating up all the good things, and leaving the picnic people hungry and frightened out of their wits. But the Pennsylvanians—who are not tramps—do not seem to have much fight in them. Now I should like to see a tramp—just for the experiment—come to any Virginian house in the neighbourhood where there was an able-bodied man, and order his dinner. Nearly every Virginian I know has been through the war, and is absolutely fearless, besides being (as a rule) a splendid shot. I cannot but think that the tramp would feel that he had gone to the wrong house.

. . . We all expected some commotion over that Civil Rights Bill; but it has been taken very quietly by the South—or, to speak only of what I strictly know, by Virginians. In one or two instances, uppish niggers—yel-

low niggers mostly—incited thereto by scallawag lawyers of the Dodson and Fogg type, have endeavoured to force themselves into hotel dining-rooms, and into the best seats in places of entertainment. Naturally, they have been refused admittance. It would appear, as far as I can make it out, that no complaint of non-admittance will lie against a hotel-keeper, as a hotel is not other, legally, than the owner's private house ; and it is held that every householder has the right to refuse admittance when and to whom he pleases. . . . This right has been exercised up North quite lately by the proprietor of one of the fashionable mammoth hotels at a fashionable watering-place. He, for reasons best known to himself, took a dislike to Jews. Whereupon he decreed that no Jews should be admitted. The pretence was that the tone and reputation of his hotel would be lowered if it became known as a place of Hebrew resort. There was great indignation among the Hebrew community, but they could do nothing. (Can you imagine a Rothschild or a Montefiore or a Beaconsfield being refused

admittance at the Bedford, or at Claridge's, lest the tone and reputation of either of those hotels should suffer?)

In the case of places of amusement, such as opera-houses and concert-rooms, they are generally kept up by subscriptions from the whites. If the blacks were allowed to enter the places reserved for white people, the whites would withdraw their subscriptions, and the whole enterprise would fall to the ground. On board the packet which runs from Richmond to Lexington, a nigger having paid the proper fare, one day took his seat at the saloon dinner-table before the bell rang. The captain was equal to the emergency. He did not refuse the man a first-class dinner, because it was certain that there was a scallawag lawyer somewhere, who had been putting him up to the move, expecting to make a case out of the refusal of admittance, which was taken for granted. So the captain—who must have been a bit of a wag—merely nodded his head when the steward came to tell him that a “cullud man” had paid first-class fare, and was sitting at table!

A hint was dropped to the white passengers, who, in any case, seeing a negro at the table, would have forbore to take their seats. At the proper time the head-waiter—a negro— informed the negro who was “going in” for his civil rights —“Dinner ready, sah.” He sat down, and was waited on by the whole tribe of negro waiters, all grinning and making fun of him in the most cruel manner. After the negro had finished his dinner, the captain ordered the cloth to be removed, and a clean cloth laid, which was done. Then the dinner was brought in, and the white people sat down. At night, on board these packet-boats, it is the captain who decides where each person’s berth shall be. In this case the captain assigned the steward’s berth to the negro, and I believe the steward slept under the cabin table, in the midst of the “white” gentlemen. Strange that the Civil Rights law, introduced as an insult to the South, does not prevent harsh treatment of the blacks in the North! At West Point, the military academy near New York, if a negro cadet enters—an event of rare occurrence, but which

does happen now and then—his life is made a burden to him. He is as completely ignored by the white cadets as if he were non-existent, and may think himself fortunate if he suffers from ostracism only, and escapes actual brutal treatment.

The negro editors of newspapers published in various States have been holding a convention at Cincinnati. Naturally, the Civil Rights question has been discussed at great length. There have been plenty of resolutions beginning with *Whereas*, and fervent appeals to each other to “become self-supporting,” to find a civilisation where men will be accepted “for what they are worth,” and more of the same sort. After two or three columns of such claptrap—which I take to be faithfully reported, because I read it in a Northern newspaper which presents us the negro as hero, martyr, and demigod by turns—I read with a feeling of astonishment that from one black editor and another came loud and bitter complaints of the slights put upon them by hotel-keepers and the like at Long Branch and other places of fashionable

resort, though they "dressed as well as possible, and had plenty of money, which they were quite as willing to spend as if they had been "white gentlemen."

Now, would one of those Northerners who helped to bring about the war have a black child in his house as playmate for his children? I think not. Yet in spite of the fact that now the white man can no longer look on the black child as his chattel, worth so much, to pet or abuse as he pleases, it is by no means an uncommon thing for a black girl or boy—probably the child of some old servant—to be brought up as playmate to an only child, or couple of children. These little blacks follow the little white master or mistress everywhere as unrestrainedly as if they were dogs. To my mind they would be horrid little nuisances in the house. It is bad enough when the cook happens to have a family, and the mistress cannot go into the kitchen quarters without being in danger of treading on half-a-dozen black little shiny sprawlers, screaming, yelling, fighting for scraps, playing with the silver spoons perhaps.

I was staying a short time since with an English friend where this was the state of affairs. The children were supposed to be taken care of by some relative of the cook's, and there was a rule, daily infringed, that they were not to come into the kitchen. Practically they were there from early dawn to sunset, and of course something dreadful was always happening to them in the shape of burns and scalds. The only misery they did not endure was having their fingers jammed in doors; because the doors were never shut. Now I think I see some British matron of my acquaintance draw herself up and say—"Shocking! What bad management! When *I* make rules for my servants, I expect them to be observed." I think that the British matron in England would, if she came to Virginia, find herself obliged to do as my friend did—see her rules broken and say nothing. It was better, she felt, and so did I, to hear black children squalling from morning till night, or even to lose a silver spoon occasionally, than to be left *minus* a cook, and have to cook herself, bake, churn, milk cows, kill and

pluck chickens, &c., with several people staying in the house, and stray callers apt to drop in about luncheon-time any day. *Apropos* of the black children, I remember that one day my friend's white baby of a year old had been unusually fretful, owing to her teeth. After a whole morning of crying and screaming, one of the blacks was bidden to take her and try to amuse her, as the mother was quite worn out. She was taken to the shady side of the house, and very shortly the crying ceased. Then we heard a black baby beginning; and my friend, who is very tender-hearted, could not help going to see what was the matter. She came back laughing. The black cook had given the white baby a little stick; and had put her own baby down by her, telling her to beat "dat black chile." White baby made no objection; black baby did—hence these howls. My friend stopped this play at once, and forbade a repetition of it. Then we had a chorus of howls, because white baby began again.

LETTER XIII.

. . . THE last time I wrote I told you of a severe winter. Our last winter was a mild one, —and what disaster has it not brought ! I think you must have seen some account in the papers of the inundation on the James River. Up here, where the banks are high, there has been hardly any loss of life ; but thirty miles lower down, where the land is but little elevated, there have been many casualties, chiefly among the negroes, who never began to think of saving themselves till the water was covering their floors. The destruction of property has been enormous in this neighbourhood. The corn was just stacked out, and the people were bringing in their store of pumpkins and other ripe field produce. A few were fortunate enough to have their corn safely housed ; but on the low lands and on the

islands it was in most instances lying in heaps ready for storage. On some of the more extensive flats the corn-cribs were built too low to escape the rising waters ; and after housing the corn, the owners had the grief of seeing it carried away. The people here are something like the dwellers on Mount Vesuvius. The water rises in a mild, rainy winter such as this has been. Their fields are swept bare, their houses are carried away. There is wringing of hands over losses only too real and tangible, alas ! Spring comes ; they rebuild their houses exactly in the same place ; they plant the same fields, if the soil has not been totally swept away ; and they “reckon” the river “won’t get up again for a while.” This is the second inundation within eight years. There was one, then thought severe, the year before we came out : but this has surpassed it. When we came we had a great wish to buy an island on the river just opposite our own place. It produced yearly a hundred barrels of corn without fertiliser of any kind save the deposit annually washed over it by the river, which is always more or less

flooded at the melting of the snows on Blue Ridge. It was not, however, for sale, so we gave up the idea. Need I say that, after we saw the corn of the unfortunate tenant all swept away, we felt we were lucky in not being the possessors of that island ? For days the river was strewed with property of every kind : furniture, parts of houses, lock-gates, animals, agricultural produce, implements, barrels of whisky and flour. The post-mistress, four miles below this place, dragged out what furniture she could, and spent two days and nights on the hillside. When the waters had subsided she returned, and found the cook-house with the door turned to the east instead of the west. The water had risen high enough to float it round, but began to subside before moving it further. Many persons passed a night or two on a hillside, under a tree, or crouching beside a fence. Our poor neighbours, the lock people, were fortunate enough to have a corn-house, in which they took shelter with their children ; and the keeper of the lock below, who, seeing the water rising higher than the highest she remembered, left

her house at nine o'clock at night with her sick son, and waded knee-deep to the higher lock, which was considered a very safe one. Hardly had they changed their clothes, and got warm after their wetting, when the lock-keeper, who had been watching the water, came in and began taking out all the movable furniture, fearing the house would be undermined by the rush of the water over the pier. They put mattresses in the corn-house for the aged grandmother and the little children, and lay down to get a little rest. At the dawn of day the lower lock-keeper, Mrs B., got up and looked for her house. It was gone. M. and I heard of the catastrophe as we were sitting down to breakfast. We jumped up, seized our hats, and ran down, leaving orders to have corn-bread baked and coffee made, that we might give the poor people some breakfast. The lock-house was still standing, and the people had gone back and lit a fire. At the door we were met by the unfortunate Mrs B., who, on seeing us, set up such an Irish howl that we made sure her son must have perished in the house. The

old grandmother rebuked her. “I have lived on the river all my life,” she said, “and have been ‘washed out’ six times,—yes, once I had not time even to put my bonnet on,—but I never shed one tear.”

There was a difference, however. This one who was so brave had a good, hard-working, thrifty husband. That one who cried and bemoaned herself so loudly was a widow, whose only means of subsistence were the pittance she earned as lock-keeper, and the produce of as large a patch of maize as she and her son could cultivate with their own hands. Besides the loss of her household gear, she was bemoaning her cow and pig, and really I felt inclined to weep for company with the poor soul. Such a prospect! No milk, no butter, no meat; and she such a bag of bones already! In the course of the day she was cheered by the news, shouted across the river by a neighbour, that her pig and cow could be seen grazing in a meadow above the cliff. Our lock-keeper’s cows had also had sense enough to climb the rocks out of the way of the flood, and were found in a day or

two, having joined another herd. We took the poor old grandmother home, and kept her till another son fetched her to his home. On the evening of this wretched day, as I was taking down a jug of milk for the lock-keeper's children, I met a man in a great state of excitement, who told me he had just seen a house, apparently nicely furnished, go over the dam and break up. That night the lock-house disappeared. Next morning there was nothing left but the stone chimney to mark the place. What had been the garden was an enormous hole, on the higher side of which still stood the bee-shed. Now the waters were rapidly subsiding, and the extent of the ruin could be seen. The banks of the river, which used to be so lovely, were now bare and hideous. It was said the waters had risen thirty feet, but we had no opportunity here of proving by actual measurement how much the rise had been. The canal was totally destroyed. And now came the question to all the dwellers by the river—"How were we to get our corn and maize to market with our highway gone?" E., who had to take

a week's holiday after the labours of the summer and autumn, came back with a tale of railway tracks flooded and bridges gone; for all the tributary rivers and creeks had done their quota of damage. Our own actual loss was a trifle—only about a thousand fence-rails.

For some time it appeared uncertain whether the canal would ever be repaired. At last we heard that the Company had decided to put it in working order at as low a cost as possible, and that a contractor had taken the job, and intended employing negro convict labour. Now this news was not entirely reassuring. It is rare for a negro to be convicted unless he has done something very bad—either arson, horse-stealing, or murder. In the United States they shoot “at sight,” and there is no vulgar prejudice against shooting your man in the back, if it happens to be convenient, and you feel very much aggrieved. But there is a strange prejudice against hanging a murderer in a legal manner. It is thought kinder to give him another chance (unless the mob take him out of prison and lynch him). So it was certain that

among the gang, which was to have its quarters in a tumble-down shanty by the river, there would be some few murderers. We were told that the guards always watched them with loaded guns ; nevertheless we had an instinct that all was not right with that shanty, and we seriously thought of increasing our stock of firearms. When I saw the gang at work, I thought they were ugly even for negroes. I do not suppose that they really were uglier than the rest, but their costume was calculated to make them look so. I believe both white and black convicts have the same dress. It consists of a loose jacket, shirt, and trousers, very baggy and ill-fitting, made of a very coarse cloth, half cotton, half wool, in colour a dirty white, with horizontal bars of black. I do not know whether they are allowed hats or caps, but I never saw them with any. Some of the "trustys"—*i.e.*, those whose term of imprisonment is nearly finished —began coming to the house on one pretence and another ; but E. soon stopped that.

We had become accustomed to the knowledge that they were so near us, and our fears were

lulled, if not quite dissipated, when one Sunday night in April we were woke up by a furious barking of dogs and loud rapping at the front door. E. threw up the window and inquired the cause of the disturbance, and was answered by the head-guard that nine convicts had escaped and he was in pursuit with another guard, leaving one behind to watch the remainder. And could E. lend him a double-barrelled gun ?

They had been holding a prayer-meeting (the convicts, not the guards), and had been singing a great deal. Under cover of the noise, one convict had lain in his bunk and sawn through a log with a tiny saw which he used for making wooden combs. The walls were made of logs, with the interstices daubed roughly with clay. Having found a rotten log, it was easy for the prisoner, after sawing a little piece, to pick out the rest with his fingers till he had made a hole large enough for a man to slip through. They waited till the moon had gone down, and then they crept away. The rest got into their bunks and pretended to sleep. A reward was offered of \$20 a-head if taken alive, and \$30 if dead ;

and next day some of the neighbours started in pursuit, hearing that two of the convicts had been seen lurking in a wood near Big Island. One was captured in the pluckiest manner by an old gentleman who found him prowling in his orchard, and took him into custody. Ultimately all were captured except two. Some resisted and were shot ; but, as rule, they gave in quietly enough. We heard a shocking story of two who escaped and got nearly as far as Lynchburg. Meeting two white women in a lonely part of the road near a wood, they made them take off their dresses, which they took and put on, even to their sun-bonnets. Indeed, said my informant, they made them "trade"—*i. e.*, exchange clothes ! Everybody became very particular to be indoors, or at least in sight of the house, by dusk. We left off all our botanising excursions and hillside rambles. And the negroes were even more frightened than we were. Some scallawags and carpet-baggers tried to get up a feeling of sympathy for these convicts, pretending that they were cruelly treated. E. certainly did see a convict being

flogged on one or two occasions, but it is not probable that the flogging was a consequence of the practice of all the virtues. One, we know, was shot in the back and died; but it was because he attempted to escape in broad daylight, and would not come back when the guard ordered him, threatening to fire if he did not. This fellow had murdered five men. There was a great deal said and written about the crowding among convicts, and the inadequacy of heating apparatus in cold weather. I think that, on the whole, they were fairly treated. Their food was abundant, and of better quality than many of the poorer negroes can afford when living entirely on their own resources. Their clothes were changed and washed regularly; and I never saw one who looked otherwise than plump and shiny. Now this polished appearance is a sign of good nourishment and good health. I have learnt, from observing aunt Caroline, who has been frequently laid up this last year, that the negro when out of condition shows it by the skin taking a grey or dead look, something like a stove with the

black-lead put on but not yet polished. A black pig when out of condition has much the same appearance. As to the crowding, it is as natural to niggers to crowd together as it is to pigs or fowls. I think they were made to work very hard. But really I do not see why an habitual thief or a murderer should be treated with tenderness. One may be sure that a negro—or a white man either—who really gets himself into prison must have done something very bad indeed. Wash, who at first regarded the convicts with awe, one day ventured to speak to two or three, and asked them “what they got put in for?” He told E. afterwards, being very simple though a good creature, that every one of those men “got put in through a mistake.”

We were glad indeed when the road by the bank of the river was repaired, as for want of it we had been deprived of many a pleasant ride, and having to send for everything by the old highroad to town was a terrible drawback and expense. I believe that the very first freight-boat that went down the river took our wheat to market. E. was on the watch, for he knew

that the repairs to the canal had been done very badly, so that even a moderate rise in the river was to be feared.

The convicts were gone, and we had regained our usual feeling of security, when, behold, at midnight a furious barking of dogs and a calling outside the fence and a stamping of horses' feet! E. was away, and M. accordingly had a revolver under her bed handy. (It is only for the look of the thing. I know she could not fire it off any more than I could. It is a great deal too heavy. Now there would be some sense in having a sword or cutlass. I think I could whack somebody with E.'s sword, though I might not hurt him very much. But I am sure I shall never kill a fly with any of his firearms.)

Well, we will suppose that M. had her hand on the revolver, ready for all burglars. Then she said to me, in a stage whisper, as if the men outside the fence could hear her, "Had you not better call A.?"

In about twenty minutes I succeeded in waking him. He asked what that row was, and I advised him to go and see. He felt for his re-

volver and descended, snoring. Then M. and I, trembling, watched developments behind the window-curtain. These men were delegates, they said, on their way to attend the Baptist Convention ; were belated on the road to Lynchburg (why, I cannot tell, because they must have known exactly how far they were from Lynchburg when they began their journey). In fine, they wanted shelter for themselves and food for their horses. Then A., who must surely have fallen asleep again, began explaining that E. was away, and—in fact he didn't think there was room for them all.

Now M. and I had been laughing quietly at the sound of A.'s sleepy voice. But now we were suddenly aghast at his imprudence in letting these strangers know that the master of the house was absent. M., in her fright, put her head out of the window and said, peremptorily—"It is too late to let strangers in. You must ride on." A person who appeared to be the spokesman of the party called out—"Do not be alarmed, madam. We are delegates; perfectly respectable persons, madam." Mrs Mic-

awber could not have asserted the respectability of her family in a more dignified tone of voice. "Delegates to a horse-thief convention, perhaps," we muttered together. And we were obdurate and would not let them in.

A. was shocked at our want of hospitality! He bustled about, got them hay for their horses, and actually fetched a bucket and showed them the way to the spring. There was a kind of cubby-house in the hay-shed, where the hay had been cut out, and he told them to lie down there, which they did. He left them a lamp, too. They were six or eight in number. I thought that if they were still there when the servants came in the morning (they live in a cabin about a quarter of a mile off), I would be hospitable and give them breakfast. But they were gone before sunrise. I asked a Virginian neighbour what she would have done under the same circumstances. Would she have let them in? She scouted the idea. She also scouted the idea that they were delegates to attend the Baptist Convention. She said there was no Baptist Convention sitting. Moreover, she said that

respectable persons never disturbed a household at such an hour. At most houses—theirs, for instance—the dogs would have torn them to pieces before they could have begun their parleying. I was really glad to have a genuine Virginian opinion that strangers ought not to expect to be taken in in the middle of the night, for A. thought we had behaved dreadfully.

. . . I assure you we are rapidly becoming civilised. We have a store now, less than a quarter of a mile off; also a post-office; also a blacksmith's shop, where yesterday I read a notice—“*No shoeing done Sundays, 'cept sickness or death.*”

We are also assured that the railway is really coming. But that has been said so many times that I shall not believe it till I see the trains running. Meanwhile, it is such a boon not to send four miles for our letters and seven miles for lamp-oil (with the chance of not getting any), that we may well feel indifferent as to the railway. Another evidence of civilisation, I suppose, is the building of churches. A short time ago E. and I attended the consecration of

a real church about eight miles off. When I say *real* church, I mean that it was an Episcopal church, of course ; and consecrated by a real bishop, the Bishop of Virginia. This church was built with English money, and an Englishman presented the ground. The service is performed by an Episcopal Virginian clergyman, as it was found impossible to get one of the Church of England ;—we do know of one who would be greatly appreciated, but he lives too far off.

We went up to stay with our friends the evening before the important day, as it was advisable to practise the hymns and chants together, so as to avoid the possibility of a *fiasco*. On our arrival, we found that one of the choir, in a fit of abstraction, had departed to his house, five miles off, taking the chant-book with him ! However, we managed pretty well. I believe we sang heart and soul; and if the various parts did get a little mixed occasionally, nobody but myself was the wiser. The man before me kept good time, and sang the words so plainly that I felt inclined to pat him on the back. But I

anticipate. There was a houseful that night. I was the only lady, and had the honour of a tiny room to myself. How my friend managed to stow away everybody I don't know, but she has great talents in that line. After breakfast the table was cleared, and then more tables were brought in till they stretched completely down the room. Long before breakfast was over we saw people on foot, on horseback, and in buggies and waggons, all dressed in their best, and all on their way to church. As soon as the tables were spread with a beautiful cold collation, and ornamented with lovely bouquets from the garden, the doors and windows were fastened, and we hastened to dress. There was some discussion between two Episcopal clergymen among the guests whether there would or would not be a Communion. Mr —— thought it well, at any rate, to have everything ready ; and then it suddenly occurred to the chief promoter of the church that the sacramental furniture was incomplete,—there was no flagon ! There was a moment of consternation. I suggested that they might possibly have some or-

namental vessel which might be made to answer. A German beer-jug in renaissance style was produced, but quickly voted down. Then I suggested my friend's best coffee-pot, which always struck me as having an ecclesiastical look about it, and over which, I am sure, grace had been said many times. But Mrs —— felt doubtful about the propriety of the makeshift, and I believe ultimately a common wine-bottle was considered the least unfit thing. Then Mr —— was going off to the church to receive the bishop, who had been seen driving by in a buggy at a furious pace; and was called back and given Mrs ——'s best card-basket, because there was nothing else for an alms-basin.

Now you are not to laugh ! I assure you we did not laugh ; we were quite serious, in our anxiety to have everything as nice as possible. I must have been writing to you in a very stupid way all these years if you have not yet learned that this is a country of makeshifts. On one occasion A. was at a church about twenty-five miles from here, on a Communion Sunday. A lady of the congregation had under-

taken the draping of the table, and had put on her best table-cloth, aided by A. The proper vessels were brought by a member of the church who had taken charge of them in the churchwarden's absence; but by some mishap the alms-basin was not forthcoming. In the dilemma, an old gentleman whispered to A., who was the churchwarden's substitute—"Take your hat." And A. actually did take round his hat—an old straw one; and at the end of the offertory took it up to the clergyman, who emptied its contents on the Communion-table and returned it to him.

. . . When we got to the church there was not an empty seat except those reserved for Mrs —, E., and myself, close to the harmonium. Mr — had let it be known that he should be pleased to see the negroes, and that they could take any seat left vacant; so there they were, dressed in their best and brightest, their shiny faces grinning all over. There were more of them than the back seats would hold, and they overflowed outside and all round the building, the windows being opened wide, both for coolness and that they might hear the singing and preaching. One

and all behaved beautifully,—far more reverentially than the white people did. The majority of the congregation were Baptists, and they behave rather badly in church as a rule, in order that they may not become—or be supposed to be—guilty of anything like superstitious reverence for the fabric which some people call “God’s house.” However, they all followed our example, and rose when the bishop entered, followed by the clergymen, all dressed in the proper dress, which it did one’s heart good to see. One must, you will say, have been buried truly for seven years in these backwoods, to be glad to see a bishop in his lawn and a parson in his surplice.

Now I must describe the church. It is all built of wood, and is as plain as plain can be, but I think it perfectly lovely: so would you, if you had seen the hideous square barns they call churches in the country here. I know of one which cost more than this one did, which looks exactly like the engine-house at a railway station. This one has a high-pitched roof, a western window with three lights, some of the

panes being of stained glass ; inside, the western end is raised so as to form a chancel. The side windows are Gothic in outline, but perfectly plain. The table, also the chairs, lectern, and pulpit are of poplar—*i.e.*, tulip-tree wood, varnished with a pale varnish which just shows the pretty colour of the wood ; there is no pretence at turning, or carving, or ornament of any kind. This would have been quite incongruous with the severely plain character of the building. A little scarlet cloth placed as carpeting on the chancel floor, and laid on the lectern and reading-desk, and the slight colour reflected on the white walls by the stained glass, took off the chilly effect which might else have been caused by the severity of outline and absence of ornament.

The service proceeded most happily. There was a collection, before which the bishop informed those present who were not members of the Episcopal Church that he did not wish them to give “grudgingly and of necessity,” but only if they felt impelled thereto of their own proper motion. The proceeds of the collection

were to be given towards the maintenance of an Episcopal College in Tennessee (I think), to help young men who wished to study for the Church but had not the means. We English were dreadfully "sold" there. We had, every one of us, put our contribution into his or her purse, with the thought that it would help to form a fund for the maintenance of the church fabric,—perhaps buy a bell for the belfry, help to build a vestry, or some such thing. We could not possibly feel interested in a college in Tennessee. And for myself, I cannot see—and could not if the bishop himself were to undertake to explain it to me—why any young man should be supported by voluntary (or involuntary) contributions while studying for holy orders, than he should be while studying to be a doctor, a lawyer, a printer, or a ploughboy. It seems to me that, if I were a man, it would take all the strength out of my backbone to be so supported. However, this is only an expression of opinion. I go back to my muttons. Towards the middle of the service the chancel got frightfully hot, and the clergymen became quite oppressed,

even the bishop (who had a black fan which he had used ever since the beginning of the service) could hardly bear it. There was a window which should have opened but did not. Now you are not to laugh at the bishop “sitting in his chair by the holy table,” and fanning himself with a black fan ; because I assure you he did it very gravely, and without any fuss, so that I think he must have learnt to do it from a Chinaman. As for us, the heat became so great at last that nothing but our lively interest in the service —certainly not fanning ourselves—could have kept us awake. After a little delay the key of the vestry-door was procured, and as soon as it was opened a full draught was made through the church, and everybody felt better. There was no Communion, as it turned out, for the bishop had to drive thirty miles after the service, and was to hold a confirmation either that evening or early the next morning. He gave an excellent charge, the subject being principally on the difference between proper reverence and superstition ; and some of his remarks on that diversity were exceedingly pointed and practical.

We English Pharisees in the front seats were overjoyed at hearing him say, after bidding the people wait till they got outside before they began to talk of their worldly concerns—"Do not defile the house of God with your spittle!"

Is it not horrible to think that the customs of the country require that every church be furnished throughout with spittoons! In some churches notices are posted requesting persons *not* to spit on the walls or seats, but into the boxes provided for the purpose. Service being over, the crowd dispersed, some to our friend's house, some to other friends' houses. The clergymen sat out in the verandah, and were ministered unto after their morning's work. Mrs —— and the rest of us had hoped the bishop would stay and rest, but he said he could not. He works very hard, having a diocese nearly as large as England, and with comparatively few railways running through it. One of the clergymen told me something of his parish work. He has to ride immense distances in all kinds of weather, and goes into the roughest country among the

roughest people imaginable. Here, as perhaps you know, marriages are performed anyhow and anywhere, except in church. It is very common for a girl and man to come to the clergyman's house and require him to marry them. If the man has a licence, the clergyman cannot refuse. Among the country-folk the preparations on the day of the ceremony generally proceed in this order: The house or cabin is swept; every woman except the bride helps in cooking all sorts of meats and pies; and while the Homeric repast is preparing, guests are arriving, and the men are tasting the host's whisky. When the feast is nearly ready, the bride dresses herself, or is dressed, and the best - man goes to fetch the minister. Sometimes the minister has forgotten, if told beforehand; sometimes he cannot come. Then the best-man must go for another. Mr L. told an amusing story of how he was once interrupted during a meeting of brother clergy at his house, late in the afternoon, by a man who came riding up in a great hurry, and insisted that he should go with him to a place

twelve miles off to marry a couple who had been waiting ever since mid-day. Inquiring as to the religious persuasion of the persons, it appeared that they were Baptists, but that they were quite willing to be married by an Episcopal clergyman, or any other minister. "I promised that man I'd see him married to-day, and I am going to," said the best-man. "I've been to two already, and one's away, and the other is sick; so I'm bound to take you along, anyhow." Mr L. objected that his horse was gone to be shod. The man got a horse from a farmer near by, and they set off, arriving at nightfall in the midst of a thunderstorm. Dripping wet, he performed the ceremony. He reached home about nine o'clock, and went to bed. About midnight he was disturbed by knocking and calling. A man was outside who had been sent to entreat him to come to a dying parishioner many miles distant, who was uneasy in his mind. He went, comforted the sick man, administered the sacrament, and reached home again about daybreak. I asked him whether, when called to perform

the marriage or burial service, he wore his surplice. He replied that he invariably did so, and that he found the practice had a good effect, in so far as it imparted some slight solemnity into what the participators therein were too apt to treat as a farce.

LETTER XIV.

I CAN imagine nothing more wretched than the position of a clergyman in a country parish in this country, unless it be the position of the clergyman's wife. Nominally, there is a salary attached to the post. Practically, the clergyman is a beggar. When I say beggar, I mean beggar in the literal sense of the word. He has, in nineteen cases out of twenty, a wife and family. In nineteen cases out of twenty the wife and family are sickly. Why clergymen's wives and families should be more sickly than those of laymen I do not know. I only know that so it is. Perhaps having to keep Lent at wrong times may have something to do with it. The clergyman's salary is so much, to be paid partly in kind, partly in cash. In the salary is always included,—in places where wood, not coal, is the

common fuel,—a certain amount of firewood, for the hauling, cutting, and splitting of which the parishioners are answerable. This matter of wood-splitting becomes the peculiar and private cross of the clergyman's wife. The wood is too dry, or too green, or has not been cut to suit the stove ; or baking-day comes round, and the split wood has come to an end. I have heard a clergyman's wife say that the wood question had been her cross through life, and was quite as wearing as any other cross she knew of. Then as to the salary proper, either in cash or in kind. However it be made up, it is always in arrears. (Remember that I am not speaking of city churches, either North or South,—churches where the wealthy congregation will, in a fit of enthusiasm, vote their pet pastor a donation of \$5000 to enable him to go for a pleasure-trip to Europe. I speak of country parishes only, among a terribly impoverished people.) As I said, the salary is always in arrears ; so that periodically the wretched clergyman is forced to send round the hat, either personally or by proxy. In the Episcopal Church there

is in each parish one—it may be more than one—churchwarden. In the other Churches—sects, as we should call them—a deacon is charged with this ungrateful task; so that, beyond the fact of his being forced to make his most private necessities known, in the first place, to one of these officials, the clergyman, if a sensitive man, is spared the humiliation of a personal appeal for food. There are cases where the minister, originally, perhaps, not of a very refined type, has been known not only to take provisions offered him when on his distant rounds, but to ask his entertainers point-blank for a ham or a turkey. And I am sure that there are people who, while chary in their voluntary gifts, would give willingly and abundantly to the man who had humbled himself to ask an article of food from their store to replenish his empty larder. I am far from saying that this system has not its advantages. Under it no poor clergyman need starve. Had the Reverend Josiah Crawley been a Virginian clergyman, I think that, instead of solacing his empty inner man by listening to Greek plays read by his daughter,

or going through cycles of agony before he could bring himself to beg from an old friend, he would have strolled out and accosted some well-to-do female parishioner thus:—

“Mrs ——, we haven’t a handful of meal in the house, nor a dust of wheat-flour, nor a scrap of meat. Don’t you think you might spare me a goose or a turkey from that big gang I saw in the old field as I came by, and a flitch from your smoke-house? Or I’d take two hams if you have no flitch to spare.” And as likely as not he might add—“You need not send any beans, for we have bushels of them.”

That reminds me of the young clergyman (unmarried) who, at the end of three weeks in a new parish, sent in his resignation; and on being asked the cause of his dissatisfaction,—for the congregation was not dissatisfied with him, quite the reverse,—answered that two dressing-gowns, five pairs of carpet slippers, and three bushels of beans, were not a sound basis to preach the Gospel on.

The exclamation “Beans!” means contempt. In some localities it is almost as useful as an

epitome of scorn or depreciation, as the Tuscan “*che!*” and “*altro!*” When land is completely worn out by over-cropping, they say of it that it “would not even sprout beans.”

Sometimes a couple wish to get married, but cannot between them muster the clergyman’s fee. Then they carry him a bag of beans. If he be of a sympathetic nature he is vanquished at once by this evidence of their impecuniosity, and marries them without more ado. Then they go home and sup on beans.

For years past the deacon of the Methodist church near us has applied to E. for contributions to eke out the minister’s salary. Sometimes he has a piteous tale of penury with which to move E.’s heart-strings. And, of course, the usual sick wife and sickly children make up the constant *refrain* of his song. Very often it has happened that E. has given “grudgingly and of necessity.” We were not members of the Methodist church. We had never once entered the conventicle, and we could not feel that the minister had any real claim on us. For the last two years, however, what E. has given he

has given willingly ; because, although the minister was, like his fellows, an ignorant sort of man, there was no cant or humbug about him, and he was much more intent on saving souls than in damning souls that did not happen to belong to his denomination. Were the man less deserving, however, it would be difficult to refuse the gift of two or three bushels of wheat when the deacon comes by, and remarks that E.'s wheat crop is the best in the country ; whereas Mr ——'s has the rust, and Mr ——'s the smut, and they have the midge over the mountain. And the minister is out of flour, and does not know where to get any, as he has no money. Naturally, E. tells Deacon S. he shall have the wherewithal to make a barrel of flour.

So we see exemplified in ourselves the evils of the Voluntary system. We think a man deserving, or the reverse ; so we give willingly, or perhaps grudgingly ; or, if spite and temper prevail, withhold our gifts. Ought any spiritual guide to be thus at the mercy of his flock ? Often the minister's mouth is shut when he

ought to speak, because the faulty parishioner is wealthy, and to speak to him of his sin would be to cut off material support from the minister's needy family. We know of a case in point, where the minister suffered thus for doing his duty. *Apropos* of begging for supplies, we had some funny experiences with an ex-preacher of the Methodist persuasion, who, I am glad to say, has ceased to infest the neighbourhood. He was supposed to be exempt from duty on account of age or illness, though, for my part, I never could see any sign in him of either; and both he and his wife were certainly fat and well-loving beyond the average. He was in the habit of levying contributions under the name of loans. He came to E. one day soon after his arrival and asked for the loan of a bag of corn. Now E. had heard something of the man, and what he had heard he did not like; so, instead of saying "You are welcome to it," he said, "Let me have it back as soon as you can. If you cannot procure as good as this to return, you can send me the market price of the corn; —it is so much the bushel."

The ex-preacher departed, promising to send either the corn or the money in a day or two. That is three years ago.

He would send his sons round to the neighbours with the following formula : “ Pa says ” (pron. *Paw*), “ won’t you lend him twenty pounds of meat ? We have none in the house.” “ Meat ” is always understood to mean “ bacon.”

Now I hope I have made you understand what these Southern people are. They may be slovenly, happy-go-lucky in their ways, careless in matters where we expect precision, too fond of stabbing and shooting when their blood is up, but an appeal such as this, even from a stranger or a man they dislike, vanquishes them at once. I never knew such an appeal from lay or cleric, to rich or poor, met with a refusal. (I have even known a white woman apologise to a tramp because she only had *cold* bread to give him.) However, as the ex-preacher was not in active service, the poorer among the lenders would send, after a decent interval had elapsed, and ask to have the bacon back, or the equivalent. Then they would be met with ex-

pressions of astonishment at their meanness in asking anything of a poor minister. One man who, in a weak moment, had lent a whole side of bacon, was told that, in lending to Mr M., he had lent unto the Lord, and the Lord would repay him. That man went away feeling that he had been doing business on an unsound basis. Mr M.'s sons would go to neighbours' yards, and take therefrom shucks and hay for their horses in the owners' absence, and in some instances in spite of their prohibitions. On the other hand, I hear of the clergyman of the parish next this, who declines to serve that parish any longer because he cannot get his salary paid, either in cash or in kind. The churchwardens are at their wits' end, but that does not bring up the arrears in salary. People dislike the man, and say he does not work hard enough for his pay.

I know one very good man who was obliged to leave off serving a distant church because he could get no member of the congregation to feed his horse after a ride of twelve miles (with the same distance to ride back). He had on one

occasion reproved the people for their want of reverence in church, and the men in particular, because they always remained outside during the service, talking and laughing and chewing, and only dropped in during the sermon. The withdrawal of the horse's feed was the people's method of showing they did not choose to be found fault with. In the matter of the bishop's salary, there is in some localities just as much backwardness to contribute as in the matter of the clergyman's salary. The bishop's salary is partly made up by levying a tax of one dollar on every communicant. On one occasion, when A., acting as churchwarden's substitute, was sent round to collect this tax, he was put off with promises and excuses, so that he came back almost empty-handed, vowing he would never undertake such an errand again.

The position of minister to a negro congregation is far more enviable than that of the white minister to a white congregation. You must not suppose that the negro churches—"coloured churches," as they call them—have white ministers. The minister is a negro like themselves.

In very rare cases he may have had two years' education at the Hampton Institute, where, if a very smart lad, he will have made his way in Latin as far as 'Cæsar's Commentaries.' But the majority have not even this foolish smattering. Their ignorance is dense, only less dense than that of their flock. They possess only the power of iteration, and of misapplication of words. I give an example of both. One Sunday night, at a negro meeting, an old negro got up to pray, and began—"O Lord, we are here before Thee this evening." There was a dead silence. Somebody, to fill up the gap, said "Amen." Then he began again—"O Lord, we are here before Thee this evening." Then somebody groaned. He said it again, and there was a chorus of "Glory!" "Amen!" Again and again, in different tones of voice, did he repeat that single sentence; and before long the whole congregation was in a state of excitement. The women were going into hysterics; the men were shouting "Glory!" "Amen!" "Hallelujah!" and swaying themselves to and fro as if they had the toothache. There is

something more strange to tell yet. One white person, who had gone from curiosity to see how a nigger service was carried on, felt at first disgusted by the rising hubbub ; but hysterics—even black hysterics—are so infectious, that before long she was crying like the rest. I will only say that I was not the white person who cried on that occasion. When asked why she cried, the person in question replied—“For no reason whatever. The whole thing was absurd beyond belief. I did not wish to cry, but I could not help it.”

Now for my instance of the misapplication of words. A nigger preacher heard the word “egregious,” and thought it a “mighty fine word.” So in his next sermon he worked that word to death ; and not only he, but the deacons and old niggers who get up and pray or exhort when they feel inclined. “Egregious sinfulness” was a combination that met with much favour.

Under other circumstances the silliness of these negro preachers and teachers could only be food for laughter. But when it is considered

what tremendous power, moral and political, they wield over their flocks, this silliness becomes a serious matter. Because the minister holds the power of excommunication, therefore the negro is as clay in his hands. In his own homely phrase, he dares not "go against the man who could put him out of the church." In their turn, the negro ministers are puppets in the hands of low politicians, who, acting with and through them, lead the ignorant negroes like a flock of sheep. "Church" and "party" are convertible terms. As the white people of the South are Democrats, so the blacks are Republicans. Political announcements are made at religious meetings, and religious announcements at political meetings. Before an election prayers are offered up as fervently for the Republican candidate as if the very existence of the blacks depended on his election. These prayers are the result of the sincerest conviction. They really do believe, thanks to the scallawags and carpet-baggers who lead them by the nose, that the return of the Democratic party to power would be the knell of their free-

dom. A Virginian lady told me that, meeting her ex-coachman one day during the election campaign, when Greeley and Grant were the candidates, she said to him, "Well, uncle John, are you going to vote for Horace Greeley?"

"No, *ma'am*," was the reply, delivered with emphasis.

"And why not?"

"Why not, mistiss? Why, they say that Horace Greeley is an ole 'bolitionist, an' if he was 'lected he'd have us all back in slavery again."

But suppose—a wild supposition—that a negro desires to vote for the Democratic candidate. The fact leaks out. Perhaps his own wife informs against him. A church meeting is held; the preacher gets up and makes a speech, threatening any man with excommunication who dares vote the Democratic ticket. Suppose the negro to be more plucky, or more obstinate than his fellows. Suppose him to be endued with a power of reasoning in excess of the herd, so that he can hold some such argument as this: I am free; you are free; we

are all free. That means we can vote as we please. It is no use. He is as much a slave now to the local party leaders and the black preacher as he was in the old times to one master. And a sentence of excommunication means as much to him as it meant to a European in the middle ages. It means that none will speak to him ; that he will be avoided as if plague-stricken ; that his wife will not live with him because he is a “nigger Democrat.” It means that she will either burn down his cabin about his ears, or turn him out of doors, amidst the applause of the community. It means that his own children will be taught to revile him. So there is an end to the delights of the autumn revivals, with their wild prayers and shrieks and chorus-singing ; an end to the joys of church and Sunday - school picnics, where eating and preaching alternated so pleasantly. He lives in dread of every evil turn his neighbours can do him. He trembles if he sees two sticks lying across his path, thinking it must be a “trick.” What wonder if he dare not vote independently ? I suppose that neither the wish for heaven nor

the fear of hell is so strong in the negro's breast as the fear of being "conjured" or "tricked." The conjuring, like all other conjuring that I ever heard of, is the most absurd thing imaginable. As far as I can learn, it does not require a professional witch to make the charm work properly. Anybody who has a spite against anybody else can "trick" that person. It is done by laying sticks in a peculiar manner across his path, or by putting a bag with nine chips in it inside the cat-hole of the cabin door. The number nine has great virtue in it. Nine rusty nails tied together, and laid in the path of the obnoxious person, is a most potent piece of witchcraft. Hardly less potent is the putting a bag containing salt into the spring he habitually drinks from. When the conjuration is composed of the more terrible of these formulæ, the unhappy negro feels himself like a fly in the spider's web, enmeshed in the toils of the ministers of the Prince of Darkness. It has been known that strong men have actually taken to their beds and died from sheer fright.

. . . I have been interviewing Mary the

cook. She is a bright yellow girl (rather dark than light. I don't like the light yellow ones, because they are always sulky and impudent). Her father worked for one master for nine years, saved a little money, and bought a few acres of land ; then worked a year or two, and saved up money to build a log-cabin. His daughters went to service, and the combined efforts of the working members of the family have at length purchased a horse and a mule, of which they are justly proud. Such instances of thrift are very uncommon. The girl and her parents are, of course, members of a coloured church. They are Baptists. The Baptist persuasion, I believe, draws most negroes, as the noisiness of its religious demonstrations suits their temperaments best. In order that she may attend her church, I am obliged to let her go home once a-month. However, if that keeps her good-tempered, honest, and obliging, as she is now, I shall not grumble. Till the very hot weather came, I taught her every evening reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography, with a Bible lesson on Sunday evenings, making her find out in my

'Atlas of Ancient Geography' all the localities, especially those in Palestine. They laugh at me sometimes, and say I am going too fast and too far, and that Mary will be leaving me, and wanting to set up as a "nigger schoolmarm." Arithmetic is Mary's great stumbling-block. We are now struggling through long division, and we don't seem a bit further on (in the understanding of it) than we were two months ago. I say to Mary—"How many times will 101 go in 136?" Mary grins, looks very bright, casts her eyes up to one particular corner of the kitchen ceiling, and says, after deep thought, "Tree time." She is at her best in geography, where there is merely memory to be exercised. Now this girl I really believe to be a very good girl. I know that she attends her church as often as possible, and she has been a "church member" for years ; yet she has not—or rather, had not till I taught her—the faintest idea why Good Friday was called Good Friday, or why Easter Sunday was called Easter Sunday, or Whitsunday, Whitsunday. She could not tell, till I told her, why I should give her a Bible lesson

on Good Friday instead of the usual geography and arithmetic. I read and explained, in the clearest language I could use, the story of the Crucifixion—a story which I can hardly face with calmness, though I must have heard it, and read it, and listened to sermons on it, numberless times. What was the result? A broad grin, a wide stare! I was thoroughly disgusted. Yet I have known this same girl sit with bent head and clasped hands, in an attitude of the profoundest devotion, when, enlarging on a portion of the gospels, I have spoken to her of the absolute necessity of personal religion, personal purity, personal holiness, if we wished really to be God's children. I can only account for her misplaced grinning on the hypothesis that the grin, the laugh, is the form which emotion naturally takes at first in the dull negro mind. It may be this that makes the negroes grin so broadly whenever they come to tell me that any one is hurt badly, or has had some piece of ill-luck, or is sick or dead.

Uncle Nelson, Mary's father, is a prominent member of his church—a deacon and trustee.

One Sunday he brought E. the following circular. I copied it out for your benefit, with all its mistakes. I did not ask who wrote it. If it was my pupil Mary, I feel ashamed of her. Uncle Nelson wanted, of course, a small contribution; and also for E. to "fix him up" some copies of the circular. Its object was to rebuild a negro church which had been burnt down.

“NELSON BURWELL,
MOUNT ROCK BAPTIST CHURCH.

“To the Citisens of the surrounding Country.

“FRIEND AND FELLOW CITIYENS,— We have undertaken under many difficulties to Rebuild Our church was destroyed by fire and yet we are unable without aid to complete our House of worship under our own Vine and Figtree So we has determined to Call on the good people to Aid us a Small Amt. from each is all we ask Our worthey Bros. Nelson Burwell has been authorised by us the trustee of Said church to Reced and Solicit Donation.—Respectfully,

“SAMUEL BROWN. BENNETT PETER.
SAMUEL HUTTER. JOHN PERKEN.”

Mary (whom I told you I had been interviewing) says that the minister of her church is a very old man, who has preached for thirty years. I rejoined :—

“Then his masters allowed him to preach. Can he read ?”

“Oh yes, 'm ; he can read right smart.”

“Can he write ?”

“Dunno, 'm. Reckon he can, some.”

“Now tell me how he learnt, so as to become a preacher.”

“Dunno 'zactly, 'm. I hearn him say he got it by nights.”

“What is his salary ?”

“A hundred and fifty dollars.”

“Does he do any work on week-days ?”

“He works some, but he goes 'round to another church in the week.”

“Tell me how his salary is paid. In cash or in kind ?”

“Oh, *ma'am*, we always gives it him in money, always ! Every church member pays something towards it.”

“How many are there in your church ?”

"We have a hundred and seventy-five, and more come in summer, so the church won't hold all."

I intend to go one Sunday and hear this old man. I hope that he will not preach a sermon like the following, which is, I am sure, unique of its kind:—

"Sisters and bredderen, I am come among you to-day to 'spostulate wid you. You all been thinkin' all dis time dat 'twas de woman brought sin an' trouble into this 'ere world. Now, my frien's an' companions, you all mistaken 'bout that. 'Twas Adam, not Ebe, brought all de trouble into de world. De Lord made de garden, an' he put Adam an' Ebe dar to work it and keep de weeds down. An' Adam an' Ebe was bof niggers. An' de Lord say, 'Adam, you ken eat them tomateses, an' dem June apples, but don't you tech dem Fall Pippins. I done save dem for my own toof. Dey's like sheep meat, too good fo' niggers.'

"Den de good Lord go away about his own bisness, leminading aroun', up and down dis yere arth, a-seeking whom he might save up.

An' Ebe, she hoed one piece wid Adam, an' den Adam say, 'Dem Pippins is big, fine apples.' Den he say, 'Ole woman, jes' reach me down one.' An' she say, 'O Adam, de good Lord 'll fin' out.' An' he say, 'You do what I tell you.' So she jes' reach down one, but two falls down, an' she say, 'Wal, it done drapped down, anyhow.' So den they eat one apiece. An' when they's done eat one, they wants another. An' so, fo' long, they done eat all dem Fall Pippins.

"Bimbye de good Lord come back, an' de fust ting he say was, 'Adam, whar's my Fall Pippins?' Den Adam got mighty skeered, an' say, 'Dunno, Lord, but I speck Ebe got 'em.' De Lord went to Ebe and say, 'Ebe, you got dem Fall Pippins?' An' she got skeered and say, 'Dunno, Lord; I speck dat fool nigger Adam got 'em.' Den de Lord got so mad he fa'rly smashed his teef, an' he stomped back to whar Adam was standing, an' say, 'Adam, you big tief, what you done wid dem apples?' Den Adam he got so skeered he turned white; an' what's more, my beloved bredderen, he never

turn black no mo', an' all his chiliden, an' his chiliden's chillen, was white, jes' po' white trash. Now, arter what I tell you, don't let me hear any sister in dis congregation talk 'bout marryin' above her colour, 'cause a white nigger's no better than po' white trash. Let's look to de Lord an' be dismיסט."

. . . I have been interviewing Mary again as to the treatment of the negroes. In Northern books and newspapers I so often read how impossible it is for a negro to possess land or horses, and how many obstacles are put in the way of their material advancement in any shape or form ; and of the various cruelties practised towards their ministers and leading men. So Interviewed Mary on the subject.

"How did you get ground to build your church at Mount Rock ?" I asked.

"We jes' bought it, ma'am."

"Did you find it very difficult to get any white man to sell you the ground ?"

"Oh no, 'm. We bought it jes' as soon as we could raise the money."

"Did you ever hear of the coloured folks not

being able to get ground on which to build a church when they had really the money to pay for it?"

"Oh no, ma'am! Never heard such a thing. Why, down at Deer Lick Crossing the cullud folks has two churches—one Baptist, an' one Methodist—an' they are twice as big as ours. We bought an acre, or little mo', for our church."

"Now, Mary, did your father find the white folks unkind or harsh to him after he had bought land and a horse and mule?"

"No, *ma'am*," said Mary, with a broad grin. "Why, there's some cullud men over our way has *two* horses, and nobody says nothin' to 'em."

"Then he is not afraid of any one coming by night and hurting his horse?"

"No, *ma'am!*" with the broadest of grins.

"Did you ever hear of any coloured minister being taken out and whipped by night because of his preaching to his people?"

"Never hearn tell of such a thing—never."

"Did you ever hear of any coloured man being beaten for anything since the surrender?"

"No, ma'am; I never did hear tell of such

a thing. We jes' minds our own business, an' the white folks leaves us alone."

I was asking my friend Miss —— the other day what she could tell me of the Ku-Klux-Klan. She is a Virginian, but has lived a good deal down in Louisiana, both before and since the war. She tells me that, to the best of her belief, it was an association of white people, formed for the purpose of protecting their families and property against a sudden insurrection of the negroes. At one time, she says, the negroes in Louisiana were so discontented and irritated, because they found that the Northern demagogues' promises of forty acres and a mule to each man were not fulfilled, that the white people never felt themselves safe outside a town or city. And the larger the plantation, the greater the danger. She was often in the country at that time, staying with relatives, and they were in constant terror. Just before the first election after the war, a report spread among the blacks in the neighbourhood where she was living that the white men intended to prevent the blacks from going to the polls.

This, on the face of it, was absurd, as the whites were in that parish as one to fifty. However, the report was spread, and on polling-day they saw on the road hundreds of negroes, men and women, on their way to the polling-place, all armed with cane-knives (these are very long, strong, and sharp, and are used for cutting down the sugar-cane). She and her sister watched them in dismay, not knowing what might happen. A little too much whisky, an act of rudeness, a sharp word from a white man,—such might be the spark to set every planter's house in the parish on fire. Her brother-in-law was seriously ill of swamp-fever, and could have done nothing for them had he been up. Fortunately all the white people kept away from the polls that day, and the niggers had it all to themselves. My friend and her sister packed their trunks, however, and sat up all night to watch for the boat to New Orleans, as they felt they could not bear the constant terror on that lonely plantation, miles away from any other house. It was then, Miss — said, that she bought a pistol and learnt how

to use it ; and many ladies followed her example. She says she used to admire the heroic way in which gentlemen would at that time bear without a word all sorts of rudeness and petty insults from the negroes for the sake of their families. She was never in any neighbourhood where, to her knowledge, the Ku-Klux existed, and does not believe the association ever appeared in Virginia. She never heard of any outrages perpetrated by it anywhere, and assures me that the outrage stories were got up by the Northern Republican papers to influence people's minds, and inflame them against the South at election times. Whenever I read about any more outrages, I shall feel inclined to pack my bag, and take the next train to the spot. I am becoming a very doubting Thomas on this outrage question. Miss —— described vividly the anxiety of the white people when the Northern troops were withdrawn. They felt as if they were delivered over to the tender mercies of all the bad characters in the country, black and white. They lived from day to day in expectation of some lawless act taking place

which should set the country in a blaze. If these gangs only robbed, they were thankful. Between twenty and thirty miles from here are the remains of two such gangs of blacks. There are some half-dozen desperadoes who have built themselves a cabin in the midst of thick woods, on the plantation of a very old man. From there they issue forth on their raiding expeditions, stealing with unheard-of audacity. This old man is powerless. He knows that they unroofed his smoke-house, last winter, and stole all his stock of salt meat; he knows it was they who took a fat ox in his yard, slaughtered it, and carried away the meat, leaving the offal. But he cannot identify; and if he could, there would be plenty of blacks to swear to an *alibi*. The other gang is a horse-stealing gang, and much trouble and loss has it inflicted on some English farmers. The plan is to steal one horse and then set fire to the stable. The owner comes with as many hands as he can muster to put it out. While they are all trying to save the horses, the thief has plenty of time to get away with the one he prefers.

. . . There was a great deal of Northern talk during the centennial year about “burying the hatchet,” “smoking the pipe of peace,” “shaking hands across the bloody chasm,” and so on. Nevertheless, the old Northern hatred cannot help itself, but must crop up now and again. Here is an address to the South, quite *à la* Walt Whitman, from an Iowa Republican paper, some date in August 1879 :—

“ Ho, Southland !
“ Sunny Southland !
“ Land of rattlesnakes, yellow - fever, pestilence-breeding swamps ;
“ Of swaggering bullies, painted cut-throats, murderers in broadcloth ;
“ Of the pistol, the bowie-knife, the torch ;
“ Of moral putrescence, religious intolerance, political abominations, hideous mental malformations ;
“ Of braggadocio, swagger, bluster, and brass ;
“ Of cruelty, darkness, blood-thirstiness, ferocity, brutality ;
“ Cold-hearted, unpitying, ruthless, sanguinolent land ;

“ Land of half-breeds, cross-breeds, hybrids,
hottentots, brigands, savages ;

“ Of raw-boned he-traitors and scrawny she-devils.

“ Wearisome,

“ Somnolent,

“ Drowsy,

“ Lazy

“ Land !

“ Vain, stupid, ignorant, sunny Southland !

“ Wake up !

“ The stalwarts are after you.

“ With a hip, hip, hoorah ! they will nominate
Grant next year for President.”

There is plenty more, and worse than this ;
but even if I did not object to soiling my paper
with it, I think you would object strongly to
reading it ; so I spare you.

This undying hatred of the North to the
South is so extraordinary—so uncalled for, as
it seems to me—that I give up trying to under-
stand it. At the same time, it is so saddening
that I think sometimes I must leave off reading

Northern newspapers. Really, it is very much like the pot calling the kettle names, when one hears of shooting in San Francisco, assassination in Illinois, assaulting in Rhode Island; and when one remembers the sacking and burning of Pittsburgh by an armed mob two years ago.

LETTER XV.

. . . I AM astonished to see how much the country has filled up in the last few years. When we came, and for about three years afterwards, I used frequently to feel as if we were the only people left in the world, so complete was our isolation. Now, it would be hard to travel twenty miles in the Piedmont district without meeting an English settler. I think those that are coming now are likely to form a very pleasant neighbourhood. They all seem to be people who desire an unostentatious comfortable country life for themselves and their children. People can keep horses, ponies for the girls and boys, go hunting, shooting, fishing, in this country, for about half of what it requires to do the same in England. There is one very bad kind of immigrant with which the country

was infested a year or two ago—I mean the drinking young man, whose vice prevented his advancement at home. We had also the silly young man—the fool of the family—of whom it was said, “Any fool can farm.” And so the miserable creature was shunted out to Virginia, where he speedily demonstrated to his papa and mamma that a fool knows how to get into debt, if he knows nothing else. We had plenty of that sort. Then there was the rolling stone who had tried all trades, from coffee-planting to making up prescriptions. There was no lack of such, but they seem to have rolled away to some other quarter of the globe. In eight years I have seen one estate change hands four times, each successive owner happening to be of the rolling-stone sort. I feel sometimes surprised to see that we stick. I feel as if there must be something abnormal in our idiosyncrasy. Surely one day I shall wake up and find that Fate ordains me too, to rush north, south, east, and west, across oceans and mountains, in search of that El Dorado which one reads of in all the newer books of travel. Now it is Oregon, now

Colorado, and again Texas, or British Columbia ; —if we only knew ! I think sometimes that El Dorado is like the kingdom of heaven, very nigh unto us, if we only knew how to find it.

. . . I thought I was getting too much into a groove, so I made up my mind for a week's dissipation. D. and I set off on our travels, and had what to me was a very pleasant interlude to the usual house routine, going by easy stages of ten miles or so, from one friend's house to another, the only drawback being that the week I chose happened to be the hottest week of the season. Fortunately one does not get as knocked up with extreme heat in this country as one does in Europe. I am sure the more one guards against the heat the less able one is to cope with it. Formerly I used to shut out every gleam of sunshine from our rooms, but experience taught me it was not the best way. However, it was very hot— 90° in the shade ; and only the fact that we were riding mostly through long stretches of wood made it bearable. Even the horses felt it on two days, and refused to exert themselves. One ride I

remember in particular : it was through miles of wood, the second growth of a forest which had been burnt down eight years ago. We could see the charred stumps of the former trees. Those which had grown up since were not very large, but their size was amazing when one thought of their youth,—only eight years old ! There were quantities of the pretty, graceful sourwood—the *Oxydendrum arboreum*—which was in full bloom ; its blossoms, like miniature lilies of the valley, filling the air with an odour of ratafia—rather *à propos de bottes*. I must tell you that our young catalpa-trees, of which I planted the seed five years ago, flowered this summer, and now have numbers of pods hanging, like immensely long, slender kidney-beans.

. . . What strikes one very delightfully, in going from one house to another, is the cordiality which is so universally shown. Even the sober, cold-blooded English seem to warm up, as they certainly do not in England. In fact, I suspect that in England hospitality, in the true sense of the word, is extinct, even in

country-houses. Now you will exclaim, as if I had said something very heretical ! But did it never happen to you, my dear friend, to hear in a country-house such a phrase as—"Oh, there are people coming to call ! What a bore !" Can you imagine that, if a couple of dear friends were to ride in, *à l'improviste*, and say, "We have come to stay the night if you have room for us," the mistress of the country - house would be *very* glad to see them ? The fact is, England is too full, and English life is so surrounded with conveniences, and comforts, and luxuries, and fictitious wants, that people have become cold - hearted and selfish. Now we English out here have a chance of learning how to appreciate our friends and neighbours properly. When one lives eight or ten miles from one's nearest neighbour, one's first impulse is not to get rid of him, but to keep him as long as one can. One thing in Virginian households struck me as very remarkable : that is, the way in which members of a family of various generations live together, year after year, in peace and harmony. I visited one house where the family

was composed first of a maiden aunt, then of two unmarried nieces, then of a married niece and her husband, and lastly, of two or three children. The strangest thing of all, when one considers the usual wilful independence of American (Virginian) girls, was, that the married niece was living in her own house, that the aunt and sisters had come to live with her—leaving their own house; and that the maiden aunt was looked up to and consulted on all points (so I was told) as if she had been their mother! I saw the permanent members of the family whom I have mentioned; but, besides these, there were a sister-in-law of somebody, and a stray niece or nephew or two, all staying there for the summer. In all, about a dozen people, I suppose. And they don't quarrel, and don't interfere with each other! And this is quite a common thing among Virginians, as I know. How do they manage it? And, oh! how do they manage to make such wonderful, such splendid cake?

I really have no adventures whatever to tell you. The roads were just as abominable as

usual, and we lost our way in a wood one night, and groped about in the most absurd manner, getting at last down to a swampy place, where the horses very wisely refused to go on. After one or two failures, D. "smelt" the path, and we got out all right, only rather tattered and torn, reaching our friend's house at about ten o'clock. As they told us everybody loses his way in that wood, I do not feel as if we had been very stupid ; only another time I will have a box of vesuvians with me. As one of our friends lives within walking distance of one of the springs so common in Virginia, we went one evening to the hotel, which was about half full of visitors,—a good many from the more southern states, such as Georgia and Tennessee, and even from as far south as New Orleans. I was told that many people come to that hotel year after year. What the inducement is I cannot tell. The country is not half as pretty as it is higher up in the mountains. In fact it is out of the mountains ; it is only not a level plain. There are no pretty walks or drives near by ; there is no reading-room in the hotel ; no

circulating library. The only amusement is the bar (for the gentlemen), skittles by day, and dancing by night. What amusements, with the thermometer at 90° all the afternoon, as it was during that week ! For the ladies there is dancing at night (and dancing in the morning too, if they can get the men to stand up, and the orchestra to play). When they are tired of that, there remain generally but two resources—candy-eating, and the absorption of mint-juleps. I was ignorant enough to suppose that a mint-julep was a drink of a tonic, stomachic, *quasi-medicinal* character. So it may be ; but the basis is undoubtedly whisky. It is quite “the thing,” I am told, for a young lady who finds her mint-julep too strong, to pass the remainder on to the gentleman whom she most delights to honour, and bid him swallow it. D. had a mint-julep passed on to him in this way one morning by a young lady whom he had only met once before. He swallowed the compliment like—suppose we say—a lamb. Another amusement—but uncertain, dependent on the too fluctuating supply of beaux and “fellows”

—is to stroll up and down a path leading to nowhere in particular, decorated with the title of “Lovers’ Lane.” When a young lady slaps a “fellow” on the back, and says—“Old fellow, let’s go for a stroll,” that fellow immediately gives himself airs, and becomes insufferable to everybody but the young lady who had bestowed the *accolade*. I asked D. whether he had been so honoured. But he told me, with tears in his eyes, that no “girl”—for it seems a white gentleman here talks about “his girl” just as the niggers do—slaps a “fellow” on the back till she has known him at least a fortnight. I advised him to take rooms at the hotel, and see what a fortnight might bring forth. But he cannot make up his mind to do this, partly, I believe, from a nervous fear that the wrong girl might give him the *accolade*, and put him to the blush. Being what the ladies here call “a very pretty fellow,” he might get the *accolade* from a good many. But it seems as if he would be satisfied, for the summer at least, with drinking the remainder of mint-juleps.

I am told that it is "the thing" for young ladies to keep engagement-books, and that there is considerable emulation among the fair ones in a neighbourhood as to the filling up of these. This filling up contains an element of uncertainty which must make it almost as exciting as gambling; for it depends wholly on the supply of "fellows." For instance, there are Miss Sue, Miss Sally, Miss Patty, and Miss Corneely, with only three available "fellows" for going to church with. There is the "Good Shepherd" for the morning, "Shiloh" for the afternoon, and a protracted meeting at "Eben-ezer" for the evening. Now, as it is contrary to all Virginian etiquette for one "fellow" to take charge of more than one "girl," it of course follows that one girl in the four is reduced to sulking in the solitude of her chamber, or else must make a parade of her forlorn condition as regards beaux, by accompanying her parents to church.

We walked over in the cool of the evening, such as it was. The hotel is composed of three blocks of buildings, two rows of bedrooms facing

each other, and the dining and drawing rooms, which are in a building to themselves. There is a garden in front, with grass and walks and trees, and a fountain in the middle. There are one or two arbours, which are not half enough, I am sure; for we entered the largest one to rest after our walk, and disturbed a couple of spoony ones in what I felt to be a very cruel manner. The place would be improved by a few flowers, but the proprietor shook his head when questioned on that subject. "If I had flowers planted, how long would American children leave them there?" After strolling about the garden, we went up-stairs to the drawing-room, expecting to hear a lady sing who was reported to be a fine performer. However, she did not choose to perform while we were there, or perhaps thought her audience not sufficiently appreciative. About a dozen girls were seated round a gentleman on a sofa, and were having what I suppose they would call "a great time." Great was the chorus of "Oh, *mai!*!" (my), and deafening were the shrieks of laughter. The creature on the sofa

appeared to be making a mountebank of himself for the benefit of the bevy of fair ones. An English mother said to me—"Oh, what shall I do if my girls turn out such hoydens as those?" Where were the girls' mothers? Carefully keeping out of sight, in the passages or on the balconies! After a while the orchestra tuned up, and dancing began in the ball-room. The young people trooped down-stairs, with a sprinkling of mammas, which rather astonished me; but I acquit them of any design of chaperoning their daughters: doubtless they went down to hear the music. It was really not bad. There was a very good harp, a violin, and a violoncello. The players were Italians, very swarthy, quite Neapolitan in tint. I was told that the director was the only one of the three who could read music, and he had to coach the other two, who played by ear. They made but one mistake in the bass, and not one in the *tempo*, which was marvellously kept. The Virginian style of dancing differs in many respects from the English. They use a great many steps and dances which we have discarded, such as the

“Heel and Toe” Polka, Varsoviana, and others ; besides which they have the “Saratoga Dip,” and the “Boston Glide,” and I know not what beside. The quadrilles seemed to me to involve a great deal more exertion than we ever put into them. The night we were there was not a special night. On special nights a “floor-master” is engaged, who thunders out the name of the figure in a stentorian voice. “Hands across !” “*Chaîne des dames!*” “Salute your partners!” The society is of course rather mixed at these big summer hotels, and the bigger the hotel the more mixed the society. In one quadrille the following component parts were pointed out to me : Two daughters of a Southern bishop, an ex-actress, a grocer’s wife, a *belle divorcée*, a Southern magazine editress, a Southern general’s daughter. I expressed my pleasure, on being informed of the proximity of the literary lady, that the poor South was holding up its head sufficiently to have a magazine of its own. “Oh,” was the reply, “it’s not original. Only selections. But they are very good.” Please send me out a batch of new

magazines immediately, also a pair of the best Sheffield scissors. All mine have lost their edge long ago. But the Americans say that the only good scissors in Sheffield are of American make. Please, then, to send me a pair of Sheffield scissors of American make. I am told that they are kept in locked drawers behind the counter, and that the shopman always tries to palm off on the purchaser fifth-rate articles of English make first. But, pray, do not be deceived in this matter. For if we could get but fifth-rate steel of any kind down here we should be glad ; and how should we rejoice could we but procure first-rate American !

To return. I asked my host what was the *raison d'être* of this big, ugly hotel. It seemed set down in the ugliest slice of country for miles round. The only place devoid of trees had been selected ; whereas a few miles on either side there were lovely woodlands, which might have been bought for a mere song. But, I was told, there was the alum-spring. (For that matter, the country is dotted about with alum, iron, and sulphur springs in every direction ; some

hot, some cold, and quite enough in number to make the reputation of a dozen Pyrenees.) Now this alum-spring requires explanation. To begin with, it is not a spring; it is a rock. Why the rock should not have water running under or over or through it I don't know. It seems an instance of aqueous perversity, when one sees rills and creeks and pools in the most inconvenient places—*i.e.*, on the roads one wants most to travel by. However, here is a dry alum-rock, with water flowing perversely at a distance. So they crush the rock, and put it in water, and make a mud-pie of it; and very unpleasant and damp it looks,—something like very coarse, bad sugar. It is then filtered and sent through pipes to a spring-house, where people go every morning and drink their tumblerful. I was told that there were some *bona fide* invalids staying at the hotel. I wondered where they could find refuge. As we walked through the gardens, one bedroom block resounded with the shrieks of various naughty children who ought to have been in bed. Upstairs was the piano, and shrieks of hoydenish

laughter resounding through the building. I am told that sometimes the band plays in the garden, and the organ and the piano are played in the drawing-room, simultaneously but independently! The same thing goes on at all these summer resorts, as far as I can hear. The question is, How do the invalids bear it?

The proprietor of this hotel is a shrewd, kindly old Scotchman, who began with nothing at all, and has made more money than he knows what to do with. He has the reputation of being a very hard man — a man who will get his pennyworth, and who at the same time will unexpectedly perform the most generous actions. But it is astonishing what acts of kindness people will perform here without appearing to think that they are doing anything extraordinary. A lady makes an afternoon call, and finds her friend sickening, apparently from a dangerous illness. She remains with her all night, returns home to look after her children, and comes back to her friend again, walking many miles because a horse could not be spared — for her husband is a much-impoverished man.

And this she does, not for an old friend, or a Virginian, but for an Englishwoman who was a new acquaintance. An English family with the usual flock of children came to reside in the neighbourhood. (When I speak of neighbourhood, please remember that four or five miles' distance is quite close quarters here.) On the day they were expected, two dinners from two separate neighbours were sent to the house ;—even the kindling of fires and the airing of mattresses had been seen to. For two days these kind offices were repeated in vain, as their arrival was retarded by illness. When they did arrive nobody knew it. But a black servant, who happened to be at the little country station, saw them arrive, and carried the news to his mistress, who, with the family, was just sitting down to supper. She got up, took all the bread from the table, and all the eatables in the house, and sent them off at once for the strangers' supper. Nobody—not even the gentlemen—thought of grumbling because they had to wait an hour while biscuit was being made and fresh supper-dishes cooked.

A friend of ours had a long and most trying malady in a place where she was almost a stranger. As soon as her illness was known, everybody wanted to nurse her; everybody wanted to take turns in sitting up at night. When she got better, everybody vied with everybody else in sending her nice things to eat, from breakfast-time onwards. As early as seven o'clock might be seen at her door two or more darkey girls with clean turbans and white aprons, each with a little tray on which was set forth, temptingly, samples of all the various fancy-breads the Virginians most delight in,—such as waffles, butter-cakes, egg-bread, beaten-biscuit, muffins, flannel-cakes, puffs, and I know not what besides,—all hot, showing that the cook, and perhaps the mistress, had been up and busy before daylight.

One of the kindest acts I ever heard of was done by the old hotel proprietor. A man with whom he was acquainted had his stables burnt down by one of the horse-stealing gang I told you of, and lost eight mules in consequence. He had had heavy expenses, and did not know

how to raise the money to purchase fresh teams. The old Scotchman (he was one of the Californian pioneers) said to him, "Now, ye'll just go ahead and buy what mules ye want, and let me know the amount of the bill ; and when ye've made your crop, ye can repay me."

One day a lady passenger on board the packet from Richmond to Lexington landed at Lynchburg—where the packet waits for some hours—and took a stroll round the town, making a few purchases. On going down to the landing in the evening, she found to her dismay that the packet was gone. Her distress was great : she had spent nearly all the money in her purse ; her trunk, with her surplus money, was on board the packet, and this packet would not be back for three days. She went in despair to the packet-office to speak to the agent. You see, a lady alone, with no luggage except a hand-bag, might be received with suspicion at a hotel at that time of the evening. At all events, it would be an uncomfortable thing to have to do, and so the packet agent thought ;

so he took the lady to his own house, and kept her as his guest for three days.

The lady said to me, relating the circumstance on board the packet—"Mr —— is a perfect gentleman." So he was. A good Samaritan always is a perfect gentleman. I learnt from the packet agent himself on one occasion that he is a Scotch-Irishman, and that he has a brother who is an M.P. in the new Parliament—"a member of *your* British Parliament," he said to M., who was making inquiries about the various lines of steamers with a view to a home-ward trip. "And if you happen to meet him, and tell him you have seen me here, he will be right glad to see you." M. suggested that ladies were not allowed to stroll about the House of Commons as they do about the House of Representatives in Washington. "Ah, but you might happen to see him. You can't tell but what you might," said the good man. I remarked that I supposed he and his family were Home Rulers. He assured me that, on the contrary, they were extremely loyal. He himself came out here in his boyhood, I believe, and is now a naturalised

American. That may be all very well in the case of a youth who does not cling by the force of association to the historic past, and who sees that his only chance in life is to be in a new country, and to grow up with the country. But when any one asks me why E. does not take the oath of allegiance, I feel myself bristling all over, every quill erect, "like the fretful porcupine." I hear of men doing this thing—selling their birthright for a mess of pottage (and what a mess!)—because they have married American girls, and wish to please their wives! I think it is about as creditable as it would be to give false witness, to steal, to forge, to tell professional or masonic secrets,—to please their wives. *L'un vaut l'autre*, and if a man who calls himself an English gentleman can bring himself to do one, he can be brought by degrees to do the other,—to please his wife.

. . . One hears on all sides the complaint from Virginian mothers that the old, trusted generation of negro nurses is fast dying out, and that there is no hope of replacing them. These "mammys," as they were called, had a

position of security and trust not to be surpassed even among free people. If the master and mistress went away, leaving no grown-up white person at home, to them was handed over "the responsibility of the yard." They were, in fact, household overseers. They never left the family, unless made over as a gift to some favourite daughter on her marriage. As they grew older, their cares grew less, their office became a sinecure, and, like all sinecurists, they grew fat. The future did not trouble them. They knew that they would be fed and clothed and kept comfortably as long as they lived,—and what more could they desire? Their judgment and discretion may have been lacking in many cases, but their affection and devotion to the material welfare of their master's children, never.

For instance, no Virginian mother in old times would feel it necessary to watch, lest, when walking out in the grounds with the children, the nurse should lie down and go to sleep under a tree, leaving baby in its carriage with its head in a blaze of sunshine! As to

letting a child cry if anything could pacify it, no "mammy" would dream of doing such a thing. Her "chillen," as she calls them—quite ignoring the prefix of "Master" and "Miss," till "Master" was well on in his 'teens and Missey had been promoted to long dresses—her "chillen" were as dear as—nay, dearer to her sometimes than—her own dusky sons and daughters. Her pride in her nurslings, after they grew up, was delightful,—with its comical side, too. "You know Miss Patheeny" (*Parthenia?*), said one old negro woman to me, raising herself as she spoke. She was almost bent double with age and rheumatism. "Miss Patheeny is my chile; I nussed her." Miss "Patheeny" is a grandmother, fair, fat, and forty. And be sure she looks after her old "mammy's" comforts, and does her duty by her, as the old soul deserves.

But nowadays a Virginian mother hardly dares leave home without taking children and nurse with her. The consequence is, that, as many households—elastic as Virginian houses are—are not adapted to the reception of a second family *en masse*, the mother has to stay at

home and mope. And I leave you to imagine how a woman can mope whose home is long miles from her nearest neighbour, who has but few books, no book-club, no magazines, and whose weekly newspaper (an organ of some church or sect) is an *olla-podrida* of extracts from other newspapers, accounts of remarkable conversions, great robberies, monster watermelons, big revivals, and quack medicines. An Englishwoman under the same circumstances would do something or other. She would "go in" for gardening or poultry, or pet dogs, or constitutionals, or doctoring her poor neighbours. A Virginian mother, by the time she has half-a-dozen children, has neither the strength nor the energy for these things.

I have heard of one cruel mistress, and only one, all the time I have lived here, and of only one cruel negro nurse. I think that tells well for Virginians, both black and white. In the case of cruelty on the part of the nurse, what struck me as most extraordinary was the behaviour of the master. A nurse, to spite her mistress, threw a little boy of three years old down into

a deep creek, and then, returning to the house, told the other servants what she had done. The child was dead, of course, before they could get him out.

I asked what was done to the woman, adding that I could have forgiven the parents if they had had her whipped almost to death.

"They were not that kind of people," was the reply. "And besides, had she been whipped to death, that would not have brought the child to life again. I daresay she got whipped, some, but I never heard that she did."

"But surely they did something to punish the woman."

"Yes, 'm. Her master sold her to a man who lived in a distant county, so he would not be likely to set eyes on her again. Of course he told what he sold her for, so that the purchaser might not have her about his children. I suppose she'd do well enough as a field hand."

One instance only of wanton cruelty in a negro has come to our personal knowledge. In this case the miscreant was a girl of fourteen. During the absence of the parents, she, for no

reason that could ever be discovered, stripped and beat severely with a stick a little girl of four. The father, an *ex-militaire*, coming home in the afternoon, found the child stretched on the floor motionless, almost insensible, her back scored all over with marks of the stick. The girl was gone, and the other servants pretended to absolute ignorance ; nor did they open their mouths till Major —— threatened to take both of them before the nearest magistrate. The child was dazed, stupid, almost dumb, in consequence of the fright and shock. When he found who the real culprit was, Major —— was not much further advanced. There was the fact to be met that no one had seen the girl beat the child, though the child's shrieks of terror the next day, on seeing the girl, were pretty good circumstantial evidence. In the dilemma Major —— went to consult the ex-preacher I told you of. The ghostly man was seated in his porch, with gloves on to keep his hands from being sunburnt, reading a religious newspaper. Major —— told his story, and asked for advice. “ Wal, sir,” said the ex-preacher, folding his

newspaper on his knees, "if I were you, I should just shoot that girl."

"That's bosh, you know. One doesn't shoot girls. She must be punished somehow, of course; but how?"

Whereupon the ex-preacher explained.

"You see, Major, you might get a warrant and take the girl to prison,—that's thirty miles off. You'd be put to expense seeing her safe there. You'd have to employ a lawyer, I reckon. Reckon some scallawag would start up and defend her. Then it will be put upon you to prove how you knew she'd done it, and not either of the nigger women, or the missus, or some unknown person. Wal, you're tollable sure 'twas Emma did it, but then, prove it, prove it. Perhaps the scallawag would get witnesses to prove that she was miles away from your house that afternoon. No, *sir!* The cheapest thing for you to do is to shoot that girl. She's a 'piece,' and her mother was a bad lot to begin with. Her mother is in the penitentiary for a term of seven years, for arson, I think, or some such thing; and I have heard

that this girl nearly killed a baby once ; that was two or three years ago."

In vain our friend tried to explain to the man of peace that to shoot even a miscreant girl was what an officer and a gentleman could not bring himself to do. It was impossible to the man of peace to see the matter in that light.

"I would not mind giving the little wretch a good whipping," said the Major. "But as to shooting——"

"Wal, maybe a good whipping would help her some ; but I believe in shooting such trash. Major, you ain't skeered o' your own gun, eh ? Why, there's not a justice of the peace but would say you did right to shoot that girl after what she's done."

"That does not signify in the least."

"Wal, you must do as you please. I know what I should do," said the man of peace.

Our friend sent for the girl's grandmother, and spoke to her about the girl. He was determined to punish her somehow, so he gave the old woman her choice. Either he would get a warrant, and send the girl to prison, or he

would administer a good sound whipping, after which she was to leave the neighbourhood. The grandmother declared herself quite willing that the girl should be whipped. She had whipped her already, but she was getting old and weak, and could not hurt her much. She always was a "piece." And she'd be mighty glad if the Major would whip her properly. So the girl was tied up to a tree and whipped. She, too, voted for whipping rather than imprisonment. The old grandmother stood by with a lithe switch, ready for a supplement of blows if the Major got tired before she considered the culprit sufficiently punished. When the Major thought she had as much as a girl of fourteen could bear, he untied her. The grandmother wanted him to use a hickory, but he chose to use precisely the same kind of cedar switch that the wretch had used in beating his little girl. He told us that he never saw any soldier take his punishment more pluckily. When it was over, she put on her dress, and grinned as she walked off. When I heard that, it occurred to me that perhaps the ex-preacher's advice was

not so shocking after all. One thing is very certain, the child who was beaten has never regained her brightness, and, I fear, never will.

This, however, is the only case of deliberate cruelty I have heard of. The blacks can be cruel to their own children, but the cruelty is from carelessness, not from *malice prepense*. It is said that the black population is decreasing from this cause alone. But I am sure there are enough of them yet.

. . . We have had a very delightful and successful excursion to the Natural Bridge. We waited till the worst of the July heat was over, and then one fine morning we set off, about a dozen of us altogether, Americans, English, and Scotch. We were nearly all on horseback; but a few went in the waggon which carried our provisions, blankets, and kitchen utensils, an axe, half-a-dozen big water-melons, and everything else handy for camping out. Our course lay by the river for about half the day; then we crossed in a ferry-boat, and stopped at a nice wooded bit of hillside to dine and rest. N. tried to make a sketch in oils, but the washing-

up of dinner things was over, and the waggon ready to go on, before she had done anything worth looking at. Towards sunset we found ourselves in quite a different kind of country, limestone everywhere, and the hills quite another shape. We were warned by those who knew not to drink the water;—the horses refused to drink it. But imagine the privation to us and to them ! Just before dark we reached an old schoolhouse about four miles from the Bridge. Fortunately the door was not locked, and we were glad to get shelter, for a violent thunder-storm came on quite suddenly, so that we had barely time to unload the waggon and get our blankets, &c., in. After the storm had subsided, some of the energetic ones felled a young pine-tree, made a fire, and boiled the kettle gipsy fashion. A person living in a cottage near by turned out to be a Scotchwoman, who, seeing the waggon and all the horses tethered round, had come up, partly from curiosity, partly, perhaps, to turn an honest penny. We were quite glad to see her, for Miss H. had forgotten to bring a lamp, and had only a piece of candle,

and I was thinking what I should do about my tea, if no milk could be procured ; and the good woman supplied our wants. I fear that the gudeman was of the rolling-stone sort, for she said they had been in Texas, and had left it for Virginia, and now "he" wanted to get back to Texas again.

After supper, we were all as sleepy as possible, having ridden a long distance, so we arranged the benches as beds, turning the backs outward. The gentlemen had the space near the door, the backs of benches making a galilee for them ; two of the ladies had hammocks slung ; N. and I shared a table between us, and we were soon, most of us, fast asleep. I believe N. was the only exception, she being in misery from ticks or harvest-bugs, or both. I get the same if I walk on the grass in the garden about this time of year ; but, as I am acclimatised, they do not annoy me so much. In the night the horses got loose, and some of ours were on their way home when intercepted by the gentlemen, who, fortunately, happened to wake up in time.

They were away half-an-hour, and returned wet through. Next morning after breakfast we set off, taking a luncheon with us, to spend the day at the Bridge. We explored it thoroughly, above and below. A little stream, called Cedar Creek, runs below it, and widens out considerably, I should say, after heavy rain. Just at the Bridge itself, a sheer wall of rock descends on each side to the creek. It may have been the effect of the light at that depth,—the arch is said to be 200 feet high from the margin of the creek where I stood,—but it seemed to me the cliff inclined inwards. It is said George Washington cut his name on the most inaccessible part of the cliff; but I never believe legends. There were plenty of other names inscribed on perfectly accessible portions, such as Brag, Jones, and Robinson; but I cannot say I felt interested in them, though they may have been the names of statesmen and senators. While strolling about, Mr H. was accosted by an individual who, having inscribed his name, felt that his occupation was gone, and he must make acquaintance with somebody or die. After

a casual remark or two, he inquired if Mr H. was staying at the hotel. Mr H. replied that he was not.

" You seem a pleasant party here," said the stranger.

Mr H. assented.

" Going to stay all day ? "

" Reckon so," said Mr H.

" Say," said the stranger, " I wish you'd introduce me to those two ladies. My name is Jones—Thomas E. Jones, of Kentucky."

" Couldn't do it, sir," replied Mr H.

" Why ? Don't you know them ? I saw you talking to them."

" Oh yes," said Mr H. ; " they are my sisters."

After that we saw Jones of Kentucky no more.

I think that, as everywhere in Virginia, what makes up the principal charm of the view is the exceeding beauty of the foliage. I was not disappointed in the Natural Bridge. It was not frightful or stupendous, but was very wonderful as a freak of nature, and made a very pretty picture with its surrounding cliffs and trees. I

found wall-rue growing close to it, and another rare fern, which does not grow on our side of the river. The public road passes over the bridge, and one might be on it without knowing, as trees and bushes grow on each side, masking the precipitous descent. There is a paling, now somewhat dilapidated. There was none until a man and horse were killed, owing to the horse running away with the buggy and falling over the precipice. I suppose that the paling will gradually drop into decay, and then somebody else will fall over and be killed. Then they will put up a new one.

We reached our friendly shelter in good time for supper, all very hungry and very happy, having spent a delightful day, sketching, botanising, and climbing cliffs, with plenty of *dolce non far niente* in between. This evening we did not have a thunderstorm, so we put some benches outside after supper, placing them round the fire, as it was rather damp: We had a few games, "Gossip," very amusing,—I don't know whether English or American; then I and E. sang some "Pinafore," with an

impromptu chorus. Then Mr H. sang a Harvard song—a most amusing parody on Longfellow's "Excelsior"—his sisters supplying the chorus. After that, we all made our beds up,—not a very long process. Hammocks were slung. I got into my lair close to an open window, and soon we were sleeping the sleep of the just. How one does sleep on these occasions! The next day was occupied with getting home. We did not see anything to rave about, nothing to require long adjectives, neither alps, nor glaciers, nor snow-fields; but we enjoyed ourselves thoroughly, and parted—some of us—friends, whereas we had set out two days before as acquaintances. May all our excursions end equally well!

LETTER XVI.

. . . I SEE by the papers that old Judge R. is dead. The Northern papers remark of him that he “died as he had lived, an unrepentant rebel.” For that matter, they are all unrepentant rebels. Even those—and they are many—who declare that the doing away with slavery was a blessing—though a blessing in disguise—say, too, that the South had a perfect right to secede; as much a right as the State of Massachusetts had to *threaten* to secede.¹ That there was folly in the attempt, many admit; that there was the right to do it, none question. Nor, until it was convenient to do so, was it questioned by the North. Old Judge R. used the whole weight of his personal influence in favour of the union. He considered the seces-

¹ See Note.

sion of South Carolina¹ an act of astounding folly. It was only when Virginia was called upon to furnish troops for the coercion of her sister States, that she felt that the moment was come when she, too, must cast in her lot with them for good or ill. These are the sentiments of every one with whom I have had an opportunity of speaking on the subject.

. . . I have been hearing a good many war stories from various people. As I listen, I look at the speakers and wonder. How did they live through it all,—through such privation, such insults,—and emerge smiling? There must be heroic stuff in this land, stigmatised by the North as “lazy, sleepy, ignorant Southland.” “They are such an unbusiness-like, shiftless lot of people,” say the Northerners. Yes, truly, as the collapse of the Confederacy shows. It seems to have been “unbusiness-like” from beginning to end.

One hardly knows whether to cry or to laugh when one hears of an association of ladies hav-

¹ South Carolina was the first to pass the ordinance of secession, Dec. 20, 1860.

ing been formed to collect old iron pots and pans with which to build an armour-plated vessel. When the Confederate Treasury was empty, a foolish South Carolina woman proposed to fill it by the simple expedient of having her own head, and the head of every Southern white woman, shorn, and sending the collected hair to Europe for sale! And the newspapers seriously discussed this absurd proposition. The Government actually appealed to the people to give their plate and jewellery to help to carry on the war; and the Richmond papers published monthly lists of the articles of plate so given. One is silent in the face of such heroism. I suppose that, after her children, a woman must love her plate and her jewels best, because of the associations connected with them. The Southern woman gave these, and her children too.

Then, again, the endurance of them all! The men starved, to be sure; but a man is supposed to be able to put up with a certain amount of starvation if he makes up his mind to it. Thousands of Confederate soldiers — one may

say the whole army—were in a state of more or less starvation during the last two years of the war,—and the women at home were starving too. A friend told me that, when living near Charlottesville, she had often gone to her room after dinner and cried with hunger, so scant in quantity and so bad in quality was the food. And yet she knew that she was fortunate in having food of any kind; for there were many who had not even rusty pork and coarse meal. In some places families lived for months on the despised bean, thankful to have something which, if coarse, would at least fill their craving stomachs. I have heard a good deal of the sufferings of people whose homes happened to lie within the line of march chosen by Hunter in his famous raid. For ten miles on either hand his force swept the country like a horde of locusts. One lady, hearing of their merciless requisitions, took her cow—her only remaining cow—up-stairs into her bedroom, trusting that the animal might keep quiet as long as the raiding party remained within hearing. Another collected her cocks and hens, and put

them into a big box which she put down into the cellar, and covered over carefully with thick canvas, hoping that the cocks would not betray their whereabouts. In a country house which happened to be not only in the line of the Federal but of the Confederate march, twenty ladies had assembled from tide-water Virginia, some from Richmond, some from Norfolk, thinking that they would be safer in the Piedmont district. But the country was swept, first by one force, then by the other, each making requisitions in its turn ; and then, to crown misfortune, at the end of the war, parties of bushwhackers came foraging, and these, naturally, were more dreaded than Confederate or Federal. These ladies were almost starved. Such stories they tell of the substitutes they experimented with for coffee, and how they hunted for blackberries and other wild fruits, and dried them in the sun, because they had no sugar for preserving, and their apple and peach orchard had been “raided.” They had coarse home-spun brown cotton cloth, woven by the negroes for making shirts for the plantation “hands,”—for every

plantation in those days had its loom. When all their dresses were in rags, and they had no money to buy any more, they made dresses of this coarse shirting ; and one or two who had some scarlet trimming put that on, and thought themselves very fine. Mrs H. told me that she was a girl of sixteen at that time, living with an aunt and uncle. They were all women in the house when a party of Hunter's men came, save for her uncle, who was getting old, and was at that time ill in bed. One of her cousins, a sickly girl of fourteen, was subject to fits. The alarm of seeing the Yankees swarming up the avenue and surrounding the house at once threw her into a fit. The only thing to be done on these occasions was to give her a warm bath. By the time her mother had got her into the bath, the soldiers were pillaging the house. Mrs —— locked the bedroom door and forbade them entering it, appealing to the captain for protection. The captain said, " How do I know you've got a sick girl in a bath ? As likely as not you are fooling me ; " and ordered the door to be burst open. Mrs —— thereupon expressed

her opinion of his nation in no measured terms. He swore at her, and bade her hold her tongue. After that he ordered her to bring him something to eat, and sat in the drawing-room waiting for it, with his heels on the mantelpiece, where there was a fine French clock and various French ornaments. Mrs H., passing through a passage leading to the drawing-room, picked up a silver spoon with the family initial engraved on it. The soldiers had looted the plate the first thing. She went into the drawing-room and presented the spoon to the Yankee captain, saying, "Here is a spoon of yours, sir, which I picked up outside the door. I suppose you dropped it from your pocket." The Yankee captain scowled at her and said, "My spoon ! What do you mean, girl ? Do you suppose I steal spoons ?"

"Oh yes," said the girl of sixteen. "Why, of course I did. They have all been stealing the spoons. Of course I supposed you would get your share. Why, what else do you Yankees come down here for, I'd like to know ? You don't imagine we are so glad to see you, do you ?"

The captain swore roundly at her. "Ah," said he, when he had relieved his mind by a volley of oaths, "it's you Southern she-devils that have kept the war going so long. Girl, have you any brothers in the army?"

"Yes," was the undaunted reply; "and if they ever spare a Yankee after hearing of the night's work you have made here, I will never speak to them again." "I don't know whether I should say that now," she remarked, "now that I am grown old and sober. Yes, I think I should, all things considered. Anyhow, I was so pleased then to see that I had made the Yankee *so mad*, that I did not care what I said."

Although assured of the utter helplessness of Mrs H.'s uncle, the Yankee captain made him rise and go with his party to headquarters, declaring that he was too well known as a Secesh. to be left at home. Instead of allowing him to ride his own horse, they forced him to get on one of the plough-horses. They took away nearly every animal on the place. Those not worth the trouble of driving they killed. The colonel of the regiment, as soon as he saw Mr

—, perceived that he was not likely to trouble them, and he was allowed to return home. He got back after a few weeks, his family all that time having supposed him to be dead. He did not die at the time, but he never recovered the shock, fatigue, and exposure to which he had been subjected, and sank gradually.

You must have seen already in print, I should think, the Northern general's boast, "that he would lay the country waste so that a crow flying over it should have to carry his own rations with him;" and that other boast, "that he would leave the Southern women nothing but their eyes to weep with." One lady had the rings stripped from her fingers, and her diamond ear-rings torn out. In another case an invalid's room was broken into, and the watch stolen from under her pillow. The fright killed her. But these were all common occurrences. It is said by the Northerners that the slaves hailed their advent everywhere as their deliverers, and were eager in proffering any information likely to be useful. But, on the other hand, various Virginian friends have told me of

the terror with which the negroes saw the approach of the Yankees, who would just as soon rifle a black man's cabin and fowl-house of their contents as a white man's. When the Northern troops entered a city or village, the terror of the black women even exceeded the terror of the white women. My neighbour told me an amusing story of a former neighbour of hers, whose dwelling was entered by some of Hunter's troops. She had run out of her house to see a bridge which was burning, and on her return saw a couple of tall Yankees in her sitting-room, in the act of taking a few eggs which she had brought in from her poultry-yard and laid on the mantelpiece, just as her servant rushed in to tell her the Yankees were burning the bridge. She taunted them so pitilessly with their cowardice in stealing those few eggs from a poor woman and her little boy, that they put them back on the mantelpiece and walked out of the house. But all were not so easily moved. One friend, who had run out likewise to see the burning of the bridge (it was near the head of the James River), came back to find the new

fence round her lawn all torn up, and being made into firewood by a party of the enemy. They requisitioned carpets among other things, cutting up all they could find as saddle-blankets. Miss — told me how her negro washerwoman wept on telling her how the Yankees had come in and turned everything topsy-turvy—even her tubs full of clothes—and had taken the suit of Sunday clothes which she had kept for years with tobacco and camphor in a chest, for love of her poor “ole man” who was gone. This was at Charlottesville. There were numerous cases of brutal treatment, loudly complained of by the blacks, but hushed up by the white people because of the disgrace. Miss —, who was one of the ladies employed in the hospital, told me that the appearance of the first body of cavalry which she saw entering the town was most ludicrous. Every man was loaded with country produce—buckets of eggs, buckets of molasses, jars of apple-brandy, hams, flitches, poultry,—everything that was good to eat or drink was there. They stopped all night and part of a day in the town, and when they left it there

was literally nothing to eat. "And then," she added, "worse than that, they spoilt all they could not carry away." A Yankee, seeing two little white children clinging to their negro nurse at the door of a house they were about to enter, accosted her thus, supposing her to be a white woman—"You ugly hook-nosed devil, are those your children?"

"Yes, sir," said the "mammy," "they'se my chillen." Then she went to her mistress and cried, because the Yankee had called her an "ugly hook-nosed devil"—and the children cried too. But I could tire you out with stories of the thefts and insults. Towards the latter part of the war thieving was reduced to a system, and robberies from the person, accompanied by brutality, became quite ordinary everyday occurrences. But commonest of all are the stories of privation, of actual want of food, of dreary makeshifts to fill hungry stomachs. "We were really relieved," said a lady to me, "when our niggers all went away, for we had nothing to feed them with, and we were all starving together." Even salt became scarce,

more from difficulties of transport to certain localities than from any other reason. There was a terrible scarcity of medicines, both because of Government requisitions, and because the Northern raiders took care to pillage and destroy all drug-stores as well as others. All the saltpetre in private houses was requisitioned. Even the earthen floors of old tobacco-barns were dug over, for the sake of the nitre they were supposed to contain. In Richmond things were at such a pass that a barrel of flour was sometimes sold for a thousand dollars, Confederate currency. Ladies began to do their own marketing *on foot*. It was no longer considered *comme il faut* for a lady to be seen driving in her carriage ; nor could a thrifty housewife take advantage of a slight abatement in prices and purchase largely. She became liable to arrest as a speculator.

It has been often urged as a proof of the goodness of the blacks, that they abstained from insurrection when insurrection would have been a very easy matter, there being none left at home but women and children, and men too

old or too feeble to fight. I think that the fact of their remaining quiet may also be taken as a proof of the goodness of the masters, and more especially of the mistresses, since in the majority of instances the masters were away. Among the anxieties of the war-time, the chance of an insurrection among the slaves has never been once mentioned to me. All the long summer nights, ladies and children slept with open doors and windows, surrounded by their slaves, in complete security. It was a security justified by events. Yet the mistresses of those thousands of lonely plantations might well have trembled had they known that, towards the end of the war, a scheme was concocted by some Abolitionists (too cowardly to give their names) for a servile insurrection to take place simultaneously throughout the South. This scheme was laid before the various Federal generals in command in each military department of the Confederate States, in order that they might act in concert, so as to insure complete success.

The plan was as follows : "For the blacks to make a concerted and simultaneous rising, on

the night of the 1st of August 1863, over the whole States in rebellion. To arm themselves with any and every kind of weapon that might come to hand, and commence operations by burning all railroad and county bridges, tearing up all railroad tracks, and cutting and destroying telegraph wires; and when this is done, take to the woods, whence they may emerge, as occasion may offer, for provisions or for further depredations. No blood is to be shed except in self-defence.

“The corn [maize] will be in roasting-ear about the 1st August, and upon this, and by foraging on the farms at night, we can subsist. Concerted movement at the time named would be successful, and the rebellion would be brought suddenly to an end.”

The circular letter giving this plan, with some other details, concluded thus: “The plan will be simultaneous over the whole South, yet few of all engaged will know of its extent. Please write ‘I,’ and ‘approved,’ and send by the bearer, that we may know that you are with us. Be assured, General, that a copy of

this letter has been sent to every military department in the Confederate States, that the time of the movement may thus be general over the entire South."

General Rosecrans, then at Murfreesborough, received a copy of this letter in May 1863.

To his honour as a soldier and a gentleman be it said, he took instant measures for acquainting President Lincoln with the scheme, so that, if not a hoax, as the President at first believed, he might at once stamp it out of existence.

General Rosecrans, as well as General Garfield, whom he consulted in the matter, believed that the plan might, if carried out, end the rebellion; but that the South would run with the blood of innocent women and children; that the blacks, led on by the few unscrupulous ones who always start up to lead a foolish and timid crowd, would, once let loose, stop at no act of carnage; that, in short, "St Domingo would be multiplied by a million."

The negro scheme receiving no answer from either General Rosecrans or General Garfield, the promoters wrote again somewhat later, assur-

ing them that five out of nine department commanders approved of it, that the scheme was being rapidly perfected, and that the blow would certainly be struck.

The matter being once more pressed on his attention, President Lincoln gave it as his opinion that for the Northern army to aid or abet such a scheme would outrage the sense of justice of the whole civilised world ; that the North would be execrated, and that the North “could not afford that.” Measures were accordingly taken, with his sanction, but without bringing his name forward, by which the scheme was stamped out.

. . . And then, when the end really came, what meetings ! what joy, tempered with agonising remembrances, at the end of the toilsome pilgrimage homewards ! Those that had horses, rode ; those that had none, toiled painfully on foot,—every one, footman or horseman, received as a hero wherever he stopped to rest. Day after day, old aunt Caroline tells me, men would come by begging for something to eat ;

—so that she was busy baking bread all day, for, as fast as one would go, another would come. This was in a hilly part, not harassed by either friend or enemy, which accounts for there being anything to eat. And so, by slow and painful stages, the disbanded soldier reached his home and his family. What had four years wrought? What gaps had been made by death! what havoc in house and home! There were the survivors, in squalid attire, with pinched, wan faces, welcoming their hero, in rags and tatters, shoeless,—a gaunt, unkempt, unshaven being at the best; and if he had been luckless enough to fall into a Northern prison, a miserable skeleton, full of disease, perhaps half-blind or frost-bitten, starving,—existing as a mere wreck of humanity. Such were the heroes whom the Southern women received back as from the dead.

For years after the war, when the worst wounds had been somewhat healed, and the natural buoyancy of the rising generation would assert itself, it was “the thing” to give “star-

vation parties"—that is, parties where the young people could dance and flirt, but where there was no other entertainment (unless a barrel of home-grown apples was forthcoming). It was thought *comme il faut* to give "starvation parties." In fact, those who would have ventured to give a substantial entertainment of the nice things the Virginian soul loves, must have been either very bold or very callous, as they would at once have been set down as belonging to the category of those who had enriched themselves by speculating on the dire necessities of the people during the struggle. Such there were, no doubt, and plenty of them; but at the first, prudence made them quiet as to their ill-gotten gains. Now, I am glad to say, we do not hear of starvation parties any more. Gradually prosperity is lighting on one and another, and the old love of enjoyment is reviving, even in the middle-aged people, who remember all the past horrors and losses and bereavements. We hear of packs of hounds being got together, of fine dogs being imported from Eng-

land and Germany (which looks as if people had money to spare). There are also hunting and fishing clubs, and glass-ball matches, which are very pleasant and harmless. I attended one the other day, and enjoyed it immensely, which I am sure I could not have done had it been a pigeon match. The English side won, to my great delight, as I had not expected it. This was a return match ; and an old Virginian gentleman—a regular squire of the old school—beguiled the tedium of our homeward ride for about five miles by telling us how the Virginian side ought to have won this match as well as the last ; only—there was something the matter with the balls, or the sun, or the wind, or the man who pulled the string. I turned to E. (who was the man who pulled the string), and said to him, in the words of the old sailor in the French story :—

“Ces Anglais ont des inventions si pires.”

Now, as E. had never pulled the string before, if he pulled it wrong, it must have been quite as annoying to the English as to the Virginians.

I wondered the English did win, because they had not practised half as much as the Virginians had. But they never do. One year a scratch crew, with a badly-built boat, had the temerity to challenge the James River Rowing Club, and got soundly beaten.

We have not much to do with these clubs—we are too far out of the way. And, besides that, we are, or rather E. is, too busy. We have our own little boat which E. made one winter, and he rows us about in it when the weather is pleasant and he has nothing to do. And the boat is useful when the “boys” want to go fishing. They fish from the dam generally, and sometimes catch, and sometimes do not catch, bass and carp. The largest bass known to have been caught was $4\frac{1}{2}$ lb. Carp weigh that and under. They are considered a coarse fish, but I like them. They are certainly superior to the carp we used to get in Germany on fast days, which, though of fair size, always tasted muddy. But the charm of the water, to my mind, is not the fish it contains, but the way in which it

helps to vary the landscape, and the sense it gives to the mind of there being an outlet from these encircling hills. There is also a great charm in being *on* the water, and, passing slowly up, watching the pretty banks, with their varied greenery, with an occasional sandpiper flying off in alarm, or a blue heron watching lazily from his overhanging branch till the boat is close to him ; or, maybe, a dozen or so of wild duck, all with the same provoking habit of moving on. But this, like all our pleasures here, wants excitement, and so would not suit you who like to be in a whirl all the year round, and who think yourself lost if you go to a place where you cannot have your seven posts *per diem*. Now, frankly, I don't want any such civilised people here, so I shall not invite you. I don't say, "Don't come ;" but I warn you that this is a Sleepy Hollow, that you will find no bell in your room, that the nigger who attends table will be barefoot, and that you will see us, if the season is a good one, devouring all sorts of melons at breakfast-time, with inter-

ludes of tomatoes *en salade*—nay, you will see us eating cucumber at supper, and being none the worse. In fact, we are utter savages, and you would be shocked from the time you came till the time you went away,—and worse than shocked—*ennuyée*.

LETTER XVII.

. . . . FROM all I had heard on the subject, I supposed that there was something very impressive in a baptism by immersion. So, hearing that there was to be a "white baptising" about fourteen miles off, A., E., and I set out on a fiery Saturday afternoon in July, intending to stay the night at the H.'s, and ride from thence on the Sunday afternoon to see the ceremony. About a dozen besides ourselves wished to see it too, so that we were quite a cavalcade. I suppose all except ourselves had seen baptisms by immersion often enough before, but the aridity of the lives of nearly all dwellers in the country causes them to hail with eagerness anything that may serve as a break to the deadly monotony. This it is, perhaps, that

makes them behave so badly in church, and at funerals.

The heat was so intense that the gentlemen were disinclined to move, so that it was getting late in the afternoon before the horses were brought round. I feared the ceremony would be over before our arrival, but was consoled on hearing that Mr L., the minister, who was being entertained at a neighbouring house, had good-naturedly said he would wait until we came. Perhaps he thought it would do us good to see a baptism by immersion. We were Episcopalians who had been baptised in infancy ; and American Methodists and Baptists look on infant baptism as a fearful delusion. Judging by results, I should say adult baptism might be a fearful delusion too.

We followed the crowd, and found the immersion was to take place in an ice-pond at a short distance from the house of one of the candidates. This ice-pond was a big oblong hole, with steep banks covered with a tall fringe of the vilest weeds : Spanish needle, cockleburr, beggars' lice (so called, perhaps, because the seed sticks

so to clothing that it is necessary to scrape it off with a knife), and, vilest of all, *Datura stramonium*, with its foetid smell. The water was so muddy and uninviting that I felt sure the entire stock of pigs in the possession of the candidate's family must have been wallowing in it that morning. I selected a spot where the obnoxious weeds had been trampled down somewhat, and waited, expecting to be much impressed when the time came. Inquiring as to the number of candidates, I was told that there were but two. I began speculating on the reason for the curious and apparently unnecessary disregard for appearances which is shown by enthusiastic persons. These candidates would go down into that red, muddy pond in robes of white (as I supposed), and would come up presently looking like the *drowndest* of drowned rats. How could they reason themselves into supposing that religion required them to make themselves such an absurd and dirty spectacle for the amusement of that gaping, tittering crowd of girls with their *beaux*?

Presently an old man came through the

-crowd and pushed a plank into the water. From a certain something in the cast of his features, and a certain rusty respectability in his garments, I felt sure he was a deacon. He propped up the plank very cleverly, and descended cautiously to test its stability. When he was within a foot or so of the water, the plank (being thereto instigated by an evil spirit belonging to one of the swinish herd which had so lately disported itself in that pond) tipped over, and plunged the deacon into the water, amidst loud laughter from all the girls and boys. Some even among our own party had much ado to preserve a proper gravity. But the old deacon's face was good to see. From his impassible countenance one would have supposed that he was not surprised at all, but had expected, if not intended, to flop down into that dirty water. Presently the minister appeared, walking bareheaded from the house, with a book in his hand, followed by the candidates and their friends. Both candidates were women : one was young, one was middle-aged, and both were dressed in black. A hymn was

sung : one of those disappointing hymns which seem to have no particular tune, and which nobody seems to know exactly how to begin, or how to end,—certainly a dispiriting, not a solemn, hymn. Then the minister began to read the service from his book. As far as I could gather, being on the opposite side of the pond, it was similar to the baptismal service I had heard at Shiloh. Such responses as there were to make, the candidates were ignorant of, and were prompted by the minister. Shutting his book, he said—“ After the ceremony is performed, the congregation will consider itself dismissed.” Then he went down into the water, and the old deacon stood with a hand ready to steady him. Then the middle-aged candidate went down, and nearly slipped, but was caught in time. She was very plucky, and did not utter a sound. When the turn of the younger woman came, she uttered a most injudicious shriek just as she was being dipped. The dipping was done just as that dreadful, stalwart Cornish bathing-woman used to dip you and me—backwards. Only that we were dipped

in clear, sparkling water, which made a difference. After being dipped, the women walked up the plank, dirty and dripping, were covered up in long black cloaks by friendly hands, and so retired slowly to the house.

I said to Miss H.—“Do you think they are the better for it ?”

Miss H. (who is an optimist) replied—“I hope so, I am sure. Poor Mrs —— wants something to do her good, for she has such a good-for-nothing husband.”

We mounted, and rode back. Of all that crowd, I am sure that not five people (besides the candidates and the minister) looked on the ceremony with such feeling as is fit in the beholders of a religious ceremony. As we rode, Mr —— said—“By Jove ! do you know I quite forgot to take off my hat till Mr L. began to say the Lord’s Prayer. All at once it then occurred to me that I was witnessing a religious rite.”

Poor Mr L., I was told, is quite worn out with his frequent revival services. I felt so sorry he had not a pair of those “baptismal pants” which a New York india-rubber company

advertises at \$12. In spite of his stereotyped phrases, and his woe-begone countenance, I believe him to be no humbug, as so many of these preachers are, but thoroughly in earnest ; anxious to save souls because of the souls, not because of the credit he will get in the religious newspaper published by his Church.

But to us of other Churches, and to the crowd of no Church at all, what elements of solemnity were there in this so-called religious rite ? A muddy pond, a rickety, slippery plank, a grinning crowd, a stout woman, and a nervous one ; with a priest in rusty secular garments, who was obliged to "coach" the candidates in their responses.

I tried to picture to myself after what manner John must have baptised in Jordan. Surely the Jew, accustomed to surround each act of worship with an elaborate ceremonial, would have seen to it that no element of burlesque should intrude itself into a rite so significant and so solemn as that of baptism, although one not enjoined by the ceremonial law.

Another white baptism I saw, quite late in

the autumn. This time the rite was performed at the river, and the candidates—two hulking boys and a little shivering girl—had the comfort (if it was any) of being dipped in clean water. The girl was made to stand with the water up to her arm-pits, waiting till the two boys were dipped, which I thought a great shame. The hymns were badly sung, as usual ; and the only noticeable thing in the minister's address was his condemnation of certain churches (*i.e.*, the Methodist Shiloh for one) where candidates were baptised while sitting. “For,” said he, “Paul said, ‘Arise and be baptised.’ He didn’t say, ‘Set down in yer char and be baptised.’”

. . . “But,” said everybody, “you should see a nigger baptising.” Unfortunately, the nigger baptisings have been always held at such distances that E. did not care to have the horses taken so far on a Sunday ; or else did not wish, himself, to incur unnecessary fatigue on a day of rest. But while staying at the C.’s last September, I heard that at Mount Rock Church there was to be a great baptising, and also a funeral sermon preached on a negro who

had been accidentally shot by a white man last spring. It is said that the white man, who was out shooting turkeys, saw something moving behind a bush, thought it was a turkey, and fired, wounding the negro in the head, so that he died shortly afterwards.

The preacher was to be a man named Moses Johnson, who had, as I was told, been preaching for the last thirty years. Mount Rock being about six miles from the C.'s, I set out, accompanied by Mr H., soon after breakfast, the baptising being announced for ten o'clock. All the negroes in the country appeared to be on their way to Mount Rock. Most were on foot ; here and there we came upon a party in a waggon, and a few were riding mules. All were provided with ample picnic-baskets. At the foot of the hill on which the church was built was a piney hollow, washed into holes and gullies by the rains. At the deepest end a little brook ran, which had been artificially widened and hollowed out, so as to form a pool. As it was impossible to get the horses through the pine brush, we dismounted, and, tying the

animals up, made our way down to the pool on foot. Uncle Nelson came up, very civil and smiling, and directed us to a high bank which overhung the pool, where we could see and hear everything comfortably.

In a few moments the service began. The preacher, Moses Johnson, gave out from a book a hymn beginning, "Servant of God, well done;" indicating the measure to which it was to be sung. Am I wrong in supposing this to be one of John Wesley's hymns? It seemed to me that I had heard that hymn before, and the tune too. It was given out, two lines at a time, and sung with a fervour that reminded me of a Cornish Methodist chapel; but with a difference! Imagine to yourself a grave and solemn tune, composed of those lengthened notes the old-school singers loved; and, in the midst of those reverend semibreves and minims,—or, strictly, in the passage from one interval to the other,—a most inexplicable tweedledum and tweedledee, something between a whinny and a shake. Some of the verses the preacher read correctly, merely putting the

accent on the wrong words, as is the wont of all illiterate readers, whether of Caucasian or African descent. In two verses he made grotesque mistakes. But, all unconscious, the congregation sang on ; nay, it appeared as if they put greater fervour if possible into the nonsense verses than into those which had been given out correctly. After the hymn was sung, the preacher called on a venerable, white - locked darkey, by the name of Brother Ben Jeter, to offer up prayer.

In the few sentences which formed the opening of the prayer, Brother Ben did not distinguish himself—that is to say, he made just such a stereotyped address to the Deity as may be heard in extempore prayers anywhere, I suppose, in either hemisphere. The only noticeable fact was that he was repeating by rote what he had at some time or other heard said by a white preacher. But when he began to speak his own words, how can I describe them ?—how can I describe him ?

He shook his head violently ; he swayed and rocked himself from side to side ; he waved his

arms ; his voice rose to a hysterical scream distressing to hear. I seemed to see a man possessed of a devil, and the man was supposed to be praying to his God !

I forbore jotting down any notes at the time, fearing lest the people's feelings might be hurt if they saw me writing while their venerable deacon was praying. I am sorry now that I did not risk their displeasure, for I find that, of the most nonsensical part, I can remember nothing except that it was utter nonsense, such as I should have believed to be a mere "make-up" of an imaginative writer had I read it anywhere. I could not have believed that such a farrago of nonsense could proceed out of the mouth of any man not drunk or delirious, as I heard from the mouth of this man, Ben Jeter. Adjectives, substantives, interjections, verbs, and adverbs, all the parts of speech were uttered higgledy-piggledy, without rhyme or reason, in this horrible, hysterical, shrieking voice. It was impossible to feel amused at such ravings. I feared at the beginning that Mr H. would laugh ; but Mr H. was lost in astonishment. As for me, I

was divided between sorrow and indignation when I saw how easily this poor flock of silly sheep was led ; for this wild, incoherent jumble of words represented something very fine to their poor empty minds. They groaned ; they ejaculated "Amen!" "Lord!" "Glory!" at the end of every sentence. And here again, as in the hymn, the greater the nonsense the greater the fervour of the congregation.

I venture to give you just what I remember, which happens to be only the part which has (comparatively) some sense in it :—

. . . "Done gone, an' done came, an' dat's de fraction of it. Oh, Almighty God, we are here before Thee this mornin', an' we's poor mis'ble critters, an' we dunno nothin'. An' they's allays talkin' o' this an' that, an' tellin' 'bout putting this one an' that one out o' de church, an' backbitin' an' quar'ling. I done gone, an' I done came, an' I don't want no backbiting, nor no quar'ling. You all say I'se quar'ling, but I say I ain't got no use for quar'-ling. What I say is, let each man mind his church, an' help keep up his church. What's the

use o' bein' church members, ef you all don't contribute. Oh, Almighty God, we are here before Thee this mornin', and come down in de midst of us with Thy power af judgment, an' save us from a howlin' hell." (Shrieks and groans.)

This, as I said, was the sense, and it was to the nonsense as a grain of wheat to a bushel of chaff. In about ten minutes Ben Jeter stopped, voiceless and exhausted. Then the preacher stepped forward and made a short address:—

"I ain't goin' ter make but a few remarks this mornin'. I wish ter give notice that the funeral of Brother Wash Turpin will be preached at the church this morning by myself, and that a collection will be made for the church. But fust we's got to get through with this business."

Here he gave his book and spectacles to an old man to hold, and stepped into the pool, feeling, as he proceeded, with a big stick. While he was doing this, the candidates, six women and one man, came to the edge of the pool, and stood holding each other's hand. They wore very dirty dresses, dirty cloths round their heads, and their skirts were tied tightly

round them half-way down the leg. The man had a clean handkerchief round his head. I think he was barefoot ; but the women stood in their stockings.

The preacher, dressed in a long garment, buttoned in front like a *soutane*, walked round the pool, stirring it up as he went with his stick, till it was about the consistency of—I was going to say pea-soup ; but, on the whole, I think that tomato catsup would be the more correct simile. Then he turned and addressed the crowd.

“ Am those candidates ready ? ”

Chorus. “ Yessir.”

“ Brother Ben, I reckon the water’s rather shallow for this here business. Ah ! ” (feeling with the stick) “ that’s better. Reckon that’ll fix it. I’ve heard some say that baptising ain’t no ‘count when de water’s shallow. That’s pure fanaticism ” (pointing at the congregation with his stick)—“ that’s pure fanaticism. That’s what the Bible says, you know.” (Grunts of approval.) “ Now, is you all ‘tending to what I say ? This ” (threatening with the stick)—“ this ain’t literary ; this is a practical business, bred-

ren and sisters—a practical business.” (Grunts and groans.) “I done baptised a sight o’ folks, an’ I used ter be mighty fond o’ baptising. I don’t car’ so much about baptising ’em now as I did ’fo’ de wo.¹ Shall I tell you why, bredren and sisters? ’Cos now the way church members walks, no man kin tell the saint from the sinner. O’cose, I’se glad ter baptise all that wants ter be baptise; but I don’t feel like I used to about it. You all say, Brother Mose, you allays quar’ling with us. Now what I say is, that when a man’s a Christian, he should show he’s a Christian by his walk. But now the Christians they go to dances (why, I knew a woman what went dancing the very day after she got religion), an’ they quar’l, an’ they backbite, an’ they talk about putting one an’ the other out of the church. Now I don’t want no quar’ling. I ain’t going to quar’l with no man. I’se goin’ to fight it out. I’se like God-a-mighty. God-a-mighty means what He say, and I mean what I say.

“I used ter say to the young when I baptised

¹ *Anglicè*—Before the war.

'em, now you look how the old Christians walks, an' you walk like 'em. But I ain't goin' to say that no mo', 'cos the old Christians walks so you can't tell the saint from the sinner. Now I say to the young Christians, follow after Jesus,—yes, follow after Jesus, an' you can't go wrong.

"Brother Ben will please raise a hymn, an' the candidates kin come on, so we'll get through with this business."

The women now walked into the pool, two and two, holding each other tightly, and looking very much frightened. Each woman, I noticed, had a cloth bound round her waist for the preacher to hold her by. A verse was sung. The preacher took a woman by the hand and placed her in the deepest part of the pool. "Don't you be afraid, sister," he said, encouragingly; "I'll soon put you through." When the singing stopped, he said—"According to the divine command, and on the profession of your faith, my sister, I baptise thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

The first woman was a middle-aged, yellow negro. She was dipped, head backwards, and

went into the dirty water with her mouth wide open. Once on her feet she gave a loud whoop, and threw her arms and legs about like one possessed. As soon as she reached the bank she behaved rationally, and disappeared in the crowd. The rest of the candidates made no such extraordinary manifestations. The moment the last person was baptised, the crowd began to disperse. “Hyar! hyar! Whar’s you all goin’ to?” Moses Johnson shouted angrily, brandishing his stick. “Why, what’s this? What makes you all in such a hurry? You’re all goin’ off without de benediction!”

After giving the benediction in proper form to such as remained, he remarked to a man who stood by—“What you all done wid dem candidates’ close?”

We now hastened to mount and ride up to the church. Again uncle Nelson came forward, smiling and officious, to point out a convenient place for tying the horses up. Then he begged us to go right in. The crowd had by this time increased so much that I felt sure the church could not contain two-thirds. So I told him we

would stand by a window and look in, as by that means we should avoid taking up places to which the coloured people had the best right. However, he insisted most civilly on our entering; and, reflecting that we should of course pay for our seats, we did enter, and sat down close to the door, so that we could get out without disturbing any one if the heat became unbearable. Three white men also entered and sat in front of us. In a few moments the building was full and the doorway blocked up. The preacher, who was seated on a rude platform at the upper end, rose and said—

“Now what did I tell you all? You all say, Brother Mose allays quar’ling. Now you all see for yourself. The folks can’t all get seats. Now what did I say? I say, Raise de money an’ build de church bigger. And you all say, Ugh! Dat cost money, oh whee! Dat church big enough, sho! Now you all kin see if it’s big enough. Now de folks is all a-strivin’ an’ a-strugglin’ fur seats, an’ a heap of ‘em ’ll have to stan’. Now you all kin see if Brother Mose is right. Brother” (to a man on the plat-

form), "you kin begin talking when I'm through. Brother Ben an' Brother Stanton, you see ef you can't find seats for dem ladies. There is some of the young men settin' down, and de ladies is standin'."

At this juncture a hymn was struck up by a seated group at the upper end. The bulk of the congregation, however, was chatting and staring about, just as the white people do before service begins.

Some one outside the church now began to sing; and the singing was presently mixed up with whoops and shrieks. Mr H. went out to see what was going on. Coming back, he told me that a girl outside was getting religion. When he stood in front of her, she stopped shrieking for a minute, stared at him, and then went on louder than ever. After a short spurt of singing, she cried, "Hold me!" and four or five girls rushed at her and held her, while she kicked and struggled violently, throwing herself about in what Mr H. described as "a most unpleasant manner." After continuing this exhibition for a minute or two, she rose

from the ground, jumped into a waggon near by, and—began eating biscuits.

Again the preacher raised his voice.

"Ain't you got through talkin' yet? It's time I began ef I'm to get through with this morning's business. Brother Stanton, thar's young men settin' down, an' de women standin'."

Brother Stanton, plaintively. "Brother Mose, I done tolle 'em to let de ladies hab de seats, an' I ax 'em kindly, but dey take no notice o' what I say. An' I ax 'em kindly."

Brother Mose. "Ain't you 'shamed? Whar was you raised, I'd like to know? I wa'n't raise dat way, myself. I never did keep a seat when de ladies was a-standing."

This remonstrance had some effect on the recalcitrants, for we saw several hulking young negroes come down the aisle, and retire sheepishly among the outsiders.

"Well," said Moses Johnson, after a pause, "the morning's running on, an' it's time we began ef we're going to get through. I see some white folks there. I s'pose they are come to hear Brother Wash Turpin's funeral preached.

Brother Wash had white friends as well as coloured friends, and I don't blame him. I got plenty white friends too. Bredren and sisters, you all know it's the custom when a man's funeral is preached, all his friends an' relations shall have seats. There's a sister of Brother Wash Turpin what can't find a seat yet. Brother Stanton, see that Brother Wash's friends and relatives have all got seats."

Just then a paper was handed to him, which he read.

"BROTHER MOSE,—I wish you to preach the funeral of Brother Wash Turpin, who died on the 5th of April. He was a deacon of this church.

"(Signed) BEN JETER."

Another paper was handed to him, which he also read.

"BROTHER MOSE,—I wish you to preach the funeral of Emma Stanton, who died on the 1st of March; and of the two children of Lucy

Stanton, a boy and girl. Emma said she would never get through praying.

“(Signed) LUCY STANTON.”

“Brother Stanton will please raise a hymn, while Brother Ben and Brother Andy take their hats an’ go round an’ lift de collection. We don’t want any one to give unless he feels like it. But you all know the church can’t be kept up unless you keep it up. Those white friends mout like to contribute too, perhaps.”

Brother Stanton gave out a hymn, but so indistinctly that I could not catch a single word. This I regretted, as, from the tune, I felt sure it was a genuine negro hymn. When I say “tune,” I mean that there were just three notes in it, each divided from the other by that inconceivably ridiculous *trillo caprino* which seems inseparable from all negro singing. The deacons found it quite impossible to get through the press, and Moses Johnson spoke again.

“Brother Ben, ef you can’t finish lifting the collection now, it ’ll be better for dem friends

what hasn't contributed to come up to de altar bimbye, and give what they feel like giving."

By this time the congregation had settled down in an attitude of deepest attention. Now the preacher himself gave out a hymn:—

“ ’Tis religion that can give
Sweetest pleasure while we live:
’Tis religion must supply
Solid comfort when we die.”

“ Brother Stanton will please raise the tune. It's short measure. Some folks quar'l with me 'cos I don't sing. I can't sing and preach too.”

Again the tune reminded me of a tune I heard long, long ago, in a Cornish Methodist chapel. The words seemed suited to the slender mental capacity of the congregation; though, alas! from what I had already heard, it is just as likely that their fervour would have been the same whether the poetry had been full of the highest transcendentalism or the most miserable bosh. However, they sang, all in unison, with an earnestness, an intensity of meaning, and a burst of sound, that would have been

touching had it not been spoilt by that ridiculous *trillo caprino* I told you of.

After the hymn the preacher remarked—"I wish ter give notice that the funeral of Brother Josh Peters will be preached on the second Sunday in October, at Mount Marioh (Moriah?) Church, by Brother Digges. It was settled first that I was to preach Brother Josh's funeral. But I was told Brother Digges wished to preach it, as he was a friend of Brother Josh. No doubt he felt it would be a pleasure to him to do so, and I don't blame him. I hope all Brother Josh's friends will attend. I give notice that protracted meetings will be held in this church for one week, beginning to-night. I hope all who can will attend. I shall be with you to-night. Brother Ben will now engage in pra'er."

We listened to just such a senseless rhapsody as I have already described. There were the same groans, the same ejaculations; and, again, Brother Ben only stopped when he had (apparently, at least) screamed all his voice and strength away.

Then, for the first time, Moses Johnson opened what appeared to be a Bible.

“The text is taken from Paul’s letter to the Hebrews—‘And he knew not *whether* he was going.’”

I ought to observe that now Moses Johnson’s enunciation became—for a negro—very good indeed. The drawl disappeared, and there was a vast improvement in the pronunciation of many words.

“Bredren and Sisters,—You all of you know’d Brother Wash Turpin. He was a deacon of this church. I may say he was a young deacon of this church. Thae wa’n’t a man as ever I met that loved his church better’n Brother Wash Turpin. I say Brother Wash Turpin was a man of God. Why do I say he was a man of God? Because I knows it. Because he loved his church, and worked for his church. That’s why I knows it.

“Now, I’m going to talk a heap about Brother Wash this morning. I want to tell you something about him that shows how he loved his church. Not so very long before he died, we

was riding together not fur from here, and he says to me, he says, ‘ Brother Mose, I’se studying—I’se studying if we can’t fix things next year so, to get you a horse, so you kin ride up yonder in the mountain, whar there’s a good many old brothers and sisters, what’s too fur away to come to church. Ef we could fix things right, so you’d be able to get amongst them, then they could have praying, and singing, and shouting too.’ Now, that was what Brother Wash was thinking of. Now, don’t that show how he loved his church? Don’t that show he was a man of God? I say it does.

“ He loved his church,—that’s what he said to me last time we took the Communion together at this here altar. ‘ Brother Mose,’ says he, ‘ I dunno if I’ll be spared to take another Communion at this church; but I know one thing,—I’m ready to go whenever my time comes. I’m ready, and I’m willing.’ ‘ Brother Wash,’ says I, ‘ we dunno the day nor the hour, but,’ says I, ‘ whenever you do get across the dark river, look out for me, for I shan’t be long after you.’ ”

All this time a woman at the upper end of

the building was stamping with her feet, clapping with her hands (a most peculiar clap, which I have in vain tried to imitate), and shouting, "Thank God! thank God!" All this time, too, the whole assembly kept up a continuous pat-pat with their feet on the floor. And now, as the preacher proceeded, signs of assent, of emotion, even of applause, became frequent. "Yes," "That's so," "Dat's de troof," "Amen," "Glory!" came from one and the other.

The preacher paused a moment. Then he began again. "Some folks say they don't understand why, if Brother Wash was a man of God, he should die as he did. Now, I say this, that how Brother Wash died is God's business, not yours."

Now the congregation began to get excited. Besides the pat-pat of feet, and ejaculations of assent and emotion, the end of every sentence was accentuated by a chorus of grunts, with a forcible aspirate prefixed. Now they began to sway themselves to and fro, as if every man and woman were suffering from a distressing

toothache. I do not know any combination of letters which could convey correctly the sounds of this aspirated grunt. The whole power of throat and lungs seemed to be required. From grunts, the more excitable ones proceeded to shrieks. And still, in her corner at the upper end, the woman was stamping, clapping her hands, and shouting, "Thank God!"

"Brother Wash went out one morning to procure something for his family—to procure something for those that were under his charge. (Grunts.) Bredren and sisters, what does Paul say? He says a man ought to look after his household. That's what Brother Wash did. (Grunts and groans.) A white man went out, too, with a gun. (Groans.) He said he was looking for turkeys. (Groans.) He lifted his gun. (Groans.) He pointed it at Brother Wash. (Shrieks.) He didn't know Brother Wash was there. (Shrieks.) But God did. (Grunts.) He pulled the trigger (shrieks), and Brother Wash fell. (Piercing shrieks.) The ball went right through his heart (shrieks and sobs), but it couldn't tech his soul. (Here the whole

congregation wept violently.) When Brother Wash went out that morning, an angel went out too. (Grunts.) An' when Brother Wash fell, the angel took up his soul, and he flew away with it, till he came to the gate of heaven." (Sobs and cries.)

Now I come to the strangest part of all. Borne away by excitement, the preacher, instead of speaking, began to shout his discourse in a recitative composed of four notes, thus :—



And the people, still keeping up the pat-pat on the floor, supplemented the end of each phrase with a low, subdued chorus, in unison.

"Now, bredren and sisters, you all know what sort of a man Brother Wash was. He was a talkative man. Now this is what he say, as I imagine to myself: 'What's this place? Is I got home at last? Across the dark river.' And the angel say, 'Yes, this is heaven; this is home.' Then Brother Wash look round, and

he say, 'Why, now, whar's that harp with twelve strings Brother Mose talk to me 'bout ?' Then the angel take down a harp hanging on the wall, and give it to Brother Wash, and he say, 'Thar it is; an' it's yours, an' you kin play it.' Then Brother Wash look round and say, 'Whar's dat crown what Brother Mose talking about? He tole me thar was one fur me.' Then the angel, he take a crown down from the wall (got stars in it too), an' he say, 'Here's yer crown, an' you kin put it on, an' it fits you right well.' Then Brother Wash go up to the battlements of heaven, an' he look over, an' he see Sister Emma, what never got through praying, an' the two little children; an' he say, 'Welcome across the dark river. Welcome home!' Then he say, 'Come along, brothers; come along, sisters; strike hands, Brother Ben; strike hands, Brother Stanton; don't you be afraid; you'll soon be home. Welcome, my young master; welcome, my young mistress. Welcome all to heaven. Welcome home!'"

Mr H. told me afterwards that one of the

white men wept bitterly during the utterance of this remarkable rhapsody. I did not see him, being fully occupied in watching the gestures and countenance of the preacher as he swayed from side to side and paced to and fro, as if on a stage, waving his arms frantically.

At length he paused, mopped his face, and proceeded in a more rational tone.

“Bredren and sisters,—Brother Wash left a wife and family. Now, you all know that when the man is gone, it comes pretty hard on the wife and family. Therefore, I say, this church ought to do something for Brother Wash’s wife. Paul says, help the widows that are widows indeed. Now a widow has no one to fetch her water from the spring (groans), nor to chop wood (groans), nor to car’ for de chillen. (Shrieks.) An’ it comes pretty hard on her. (Prolonged groans.) Therefore, I say, we oughter help Brother Wash’s wife as long as she remains a widow. Now some remains widows indeed; but some gets theirselves talked about all over the country, and then folks talk about turning them out o’ the church. So let us help Brother

Wash's wife so long as she remains a widow indeed, but no longer."

This was the gist of a sermon which occupied an hour and quarter in delivery.

Another prayer was offered up by old Ben Jeter, rather less delirious than the two preceding, after which a paper was handed to the preacher.

"What's this about?" he asked, in a colloquial tone. "Oh, I'm to read it out?" He read as follows:—

"Brother Mose,—I have lost my house and a good many of my things."

("This is queer writing; I can't make it out. Could write a heap better myself, I reckon. Well, what comes next?") "And I want a little help from the church."

("This ain't written nohow.") "Even one cent would do me good. I have lost my house and most of my things."

("What is it? Got burnt out?")

("Yessir," from many voices.)

"Well, I s'pose he wants help. It is signed, Ben Clark.

"Now you all hear what he says. 'Even one cent would do me good.' Hyar, hyar!" (to some women who were going out)—"what for you in such a hurry? You mout be burnt out too, one o' these days, and then you would want help. Now all those that couldn't contribute when the collection was lifted, kin come up to the altar, and give what they're goin' to give. We don't want anybody to give what don't feel like giving; but you know the church can't be kept up unless you contribute.

"You'll have to decide, at a meeting next week, whether I stay here another year or not. Now, you know, when a man hires out, he fixes with the boss what he is to have. An' if the 'greement ain't kept, why, he jest goes and hires somewhere else. Well, that's jest what I'm going to do. Ef you all wants me to stay, you can say so, an' I'll be your servant for another year. Ef not, I reckon I kin go somewhere else.

"Brother Stanton and Brother Ben will please count the collection and make their report."

A pause ensued while this was being done.

Then brother Mose again addressed the congregation.

"Bredren and Sisters,—I am happy to tell you that there is right smart of a collection. Ten dollars and six cents. Now that's what I call a right good collection. I feel a heap better than I did when I come up here this morn." (Loud laughter.)

The congregation now began to move away, and we, supposing the service to be over, did the same. But as we rode away we heard singing, and I was told by uncle Nelson that they would keep on singing and shouting till the protracted meeting began.

It is to me a very sad reflection, that with all the facilities the negroes have had since the war for what are termed by white people "the means of grace," "the fruits of the spirit" are, with very rare exceptions, as absolutely unknown among them as among the most savage tribes of their native Africa. The young generation, grown up, perhaps born, since the extinction of slavery, are, if here and there less ignorant, so utterly swinish in their lack of all morality, that

any feeling with regard to them is one of almost absolute despair. “To get religion” means, not to be truthful, honest, and virtuous ; but to yell, to shout, to sing senseless doggerel, to call on the name of God with loud persistence, to go into convulsions, real or simulated.

They have a faculty for learning by rote, and so has a parrot. They have a faculty for imitation, and so has a monkey. The wonderful progress of the negro race, so vaunted by the supporters of the Hampton Institute, begins and ends there.

And this is the race which is to be the dominant one in this enormous country known as “the South.” I am only a foreigner and a bystander. I pity the blacks, and I pity (still more) the whites ; but it seems to me that, were I a Southern woman, mine eyes would become dim, and my cheeks furrowed with weeping, for the desolation of my country. Adieu !

NOTE TO LETTER XVI.

"As long as the North apprehended no serious consequences, and from its very vanity refused to entertain the idea that the South had any means or resources for making a serious resistance to the Federal authority, it easily afforded to ridicule the movement of South Carolina; to compare her to a 'spoilt child,' wandering from the fold of a 'paternal Government,' and to declare that there was really no design to coerce her or her sister States, but rather pleasure at the separation. 'Let the prodigal go,' exclaimed one of the political preachers of the North. A God-speed was added by Mr Greeley of the New York 'Tribune.' And yet a few months later, and these men and their followers were in agonies of anxiety and paroxysms of fury to reclaim what they then called the 'rebel' States, declaring that their cities should be laid in ashes, and their soil sown with blood; while the benevolent 'Tribune' drew from its imagination and hopes a picture, not of the returned prodigal, but of

punished ‘rebels’ returning home to find their wives and children cowering in rags, and Famine sitting at the fireside.

“But had the Northern people really been candid and just in their professed willingness to let the South go, they might have found, alike in the political precedents of the country and in the sound reason of its statesmen, ample grounds for such a disposition. The doctrine of State secession was no new thing in the North. The right of it had been reserved by the State of New York, on her adoption of the Federal Constitution. The exercise of such right had been threatened on four separate occasions by the State of Massachusetts. She had threatened to secede from the Union, with reference to the adjustment of the State debts ; again, on account of the Louisiana Purchase ; thirdly, because of the war of 1812-14, when, as Mr Jefferson said, ‘four of the Eastern States were only attached to the Union like so many inanimate bodies to living men ;’ and fourthly, on the annexation of Texas, when her Legislature resolved in advance that this event would be good cause for the dissolution of the Union. With reference to the Louisiana Purchase, and the bill to admit into the Union the Territory of Orleans, under the name of Louisiana, Mr Quincy of Massachusetts had placed on record in Congress a definition of the remedy of secession ; for, at the instance of members, he had put in writing, and placed on the desk of the House of Representatives, the following proposition :

'If this bill passes, it is my deliberate opinion that it is virtually a dissolution of this Union ; that it will free the States from their moral obligations : and, as it will be the right of all, so it will be the duty of some, definitely to prepare for a separation,—amicably, if they can—violently, if they must.'

" . . . The President-elect, Mr Lincoln, had, at another period of his public life, made this remarkable declaration : 'Any people, anywhere, being inclined and having the power, have the right to rise up and shake off the existing Government, and form a new one that suits them better. Nor is this right confined to cases where the people of an existing Government may choose to exercise it. Any portion of such people that can, may revolutionise, putting down a minority intermingled with or near about them, who may oppose them.'"—E. A. Pollard : '*The Lost Cause*,' pp. 84, 85.

" We hold with Jefferson to the inalienable right of communities to alter or abolish forms of government that have become oppressive or injurious ; and if the cotton States shall become satisfied that they can do better out of the Union than in it, we insist on letting them go in peace. The right to secede may be a revolutionary one, but it exists nevertheless, and we do not see how one party can have a right to prevent. Whenever a considerable section of our Union shall deliberately

resolve to go out, we shall resist all coercive measures designed to keep it in. We hope never to live in a Republic whereof one section is pinned to the residue by bayonets. . . . If ever seven or eight States send agents to Washington to say, ‘We want to go out of the Union,’ we shall feel constrained, by our devotion to human liberty, to say, ‘Let them go!’ And we do not see how we could take the other side without coming in direct conflict with those rights of man which we hold paramount to all political arrangements, however convenient and advantageous.” — ‘Tribune,’ Nov. 26, and Dec. 17, 1860.

(From the same, of May 1, 1861.)

“But, nevertheless, we mean to conquer them [the Confederate States], not merely to *defeat*, but to *conquer*, to *subjugate them*. But when the rebellious traitors are overwhelmed in the field, and scattered like leaves before an angry wind, *it must not be to return to peaceful and contented homes!* They must find *poverty* at their firesides, and *see privation in the anxious eyes of mothers and the rags of children*. The whole coast of the South, from the Delaware to the Rio Grande, *must be a solitude.*”

“Dr Tyng, a celebrated minister of New York, assembled certain roughs and marauders of that city, known as ‘Billy Wilson’s men,’ presented them with Bibles, and declared that, in carrying fire and sword into the rebellious States, they were propitiating Heaven, and would go far to assure the salvation of

their souls. About the same time, in addressing a public meeting with reference to the war, he said he would not condescend to call it civil warfare. He would not meet pirates on the deck and call it warfare. He would hang them as quick as he would shoot a mad dog."—Pollard: 'The Lost Cause,' pp. 112, 113.

As a contrast to the above, take the sentiments expressed by Bishop Meade of Virginia, in his report to the Episcopal Convention of Virginia, on the eve of the war:—

"I have clung with tenacity to the hope of preserving the Union to the last moment. If I know my own heart, could the sacrifice of the poor remnant of my life have contributed in any degree to its maintenance, such sacrifice would have been cheerfully made. But the developments of public feeling and the course of our rulers have brought me, slowly, reluctantly, sorrowfully, yet most decidedly, to the painful conviction that, notwithstanding attendant dangers and evils, we shall consult the welfare and happiness of the whole land by separation. . . . I cannot conclude without expressing the earnest desire that the ministers and members of our Church, and all the citizens of our State, who are so deeply interested in the present contest, may conduct it in the most elevated and Christian spirit, rising above unworthy and uncharitable imputations on all who are opposed. Many there are equally sincere, on both sides, as there ever have

been in all the wars and controversies that have been waged on earth ; though it does not follow that all have the same grounds of justice and truth on which to base their warfare.”—Pollard : ‘The Lost Cause,’ p. 112.

THE END.

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